



NOTES,  
CRITICAL, EXPLANATORY, AND PRACTICAL,  
ON  
THE BOOK  
OF THE  
PROPHET ISAIAH:  
WITH  
A NEW TRANSLATION,  
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AND COMPARED WITH THE LAST AMERICAN EDITION,  
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# THE PROPHET ISAIA

## CHAPTER XX.

### 1. In the year <sup>a</sup> that Tartan

<sup>a</sup> 2 Kings 18. 17.

came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod and took it;

## NEW TRANSLATION.

### VISION XV.—Ch. xx. *Egypt and Assyria.*

1. In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod and took it;

## CHAPTER XX.

### ANALYSIS.

This prophecy occupies this single chapter. Its design and scope it is not difficult to understand. The time when it was delivered is designated in ver. 1, and was manifestly in the reign of Hezekiah. The Assyrian empire had extended its conquests far. They had conquered Syria, Damascus, and Ephraim or Samaria. 2 Kings xviii. 9—12. The king of Assyria had sent Tartan to take possession of Ashdod or Azotus, the maritime key of Palestine, and there was evident danger that the Assyrians would also overthrow the government of Judah, and secure also the conquest of Egypt. In these circumstances of danger, the main reliance of Judah was on the aid which they hoped to derive from Egypt and Ethiopia (ver. 5), as being alone able to repel the invasion of the Assyrians. They relied rather on that aid than on God. To recal them from this, and to show them the vanity of such a dependence, and to lead them to rely on God, Isaiah was sent to them to be a sign; or to indicate, by a symbolical action, what would be the fate of the Egyptians on whom

they were placing their reliance. Ver. 4. By showing the Jews what would be the destiny of Egypt, and that that destiny would soon overtake them, he designed to withdraw them from resting on their assistance, and to turn them to God for protection and aid.

1. *In the year that Tartan, &c.* Tartan was one of the generals of Sennacherib. ¶ *Came unto Ashdod.* Ashdod, called by the Greeks Azotus, was a seaport on the Mediterranean, between Askalon and Ekron, and not far from Gaza. It was one of the five cities of the Philistines, assigned to the tribe of Judah, but never conquered by them. Josh. xiii. 3; xv. 46, 47. The temple of Dagon stood here; and hither the ark of God was brought after the fatal battle of Ebenezer. 1 Sam. v. 1, seq. It sustained many sieges, and was regarded as an important place in respect to Palestine, and also to Egypt. It was taken by Tartan, and remained in the possession of the Assyrians until it was besieged by Psammetichus, the Egyptian king, who took it after a siege of twenty-nine years. Herod. ii. 157. It was about thirty miles from Gaza. It is now a small village, and is called *Esdud*. It was besieged and taken by

2. At the same time spake the LORD <sup>1</sup> by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

<sup>1</sup> by the hand of.

NEW TRANSLATION.

2. At that time JEHOVAH spake by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying,  
 "Go and loose the sackcloth from thy loins,  
 "And put off thy shoes from thy feet."  
 And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

Tartan as preparatory to the conquest of Egypt, and if the king who is here called *Sargon* was Sennacherib, it is probable that it was taken before he threatened Jerusalem. ¶ *When Sargon*, &c. Who this *Sargon* was is not certainly known. Some have supposed that it was Sennacherib, and others that it was Shalmanezzer the father of Sennacherib, and others, that it was Esarhaddon, the successor of Sennacherib. *Michaelis*. Rosenmüller supposes that it was a king who reigned between Shalmanezzer and Sennacherib. Tartan was a general of Sennacherib, and it is natural to suppose that he is here intended. Jerome says that Sennacherib had seven names, and Kimchi says he had eight; and it has been supposed that *Sargon* was one of those names. Oriental princes often had several names; and hence the difficulty of identifying them. It is by no means easy to determine who is intended here; nor is it very material, in order to see the main drift of the prophecy. As, however, Tartan was a leader of the army of Sennacherib; as Sennacherib meditated the conquest of Egypt; and as Judah was relying on the aid of Egypt when Sennacherib threatened Jerusalem (Isa. xxxvi. 6.), these circumstances would rather incline us to the opinion that Sennacherib is intended. See a full description of the various hypotheses in *Vitringa* on this place.

2. *By Isaiah*. Marg., "by the hand of Isaiah." So the Hebrew. That is, by the instrumentality of Isaiah, or through him. He sent him to make known the fate of the Egyptians, and the folly of trusting in them on this oc-

casion. ¶ *Go and loose the sackcloth*, &c. For the meaning of the word *sackcloth*, see Note, ch. iii. 24. It was commonly worn as an emblem of mourning. But there is also reason to believe that it was also worn by prophets, and was regarded, in some degree, as their appropriate dress. It was made usually of the coarse hair of the goat, and was worn as a zone or girdle around the loins. That this was the dress of Elijah is apparent from 2 Kings, i. 8. "He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather," &c.; that is, he was clothed in a garment made of hair, of the coarse hair of the goat. The same was true of John the Baptist. Matt. iii. 4. That the prophets wore "a rough garment" is apparent also from Zech. xiii. 4, "neither shall they (the false prophets) wear a rough garment (Heb., *a garment of hair*) to deceive;" i. e., the false prophets shall not assume the dress of the true prophets for the purpose of deluding the people, or to make them think that they were the true prophets. It is evident, therefore, that this hairy garment was regarded as a dress that appertained particularly to the prophets. It is well known, also, that the ancient Greek philosophers had a peculiar dress to distinguish them from the common people. Probably the custom of wearing *hair-cloth* among the monks of later ages took its rise from this example of the prophets. His removing this garment and his shoe, was designed to be a sign or an emblem to show that the Egyptians should be stripped of all their possessions, and carried captive to Assyria. ¶ *Walking naked*, &c. That is,

3. And the LORD said, Like as a sign and wonder upon Egypt my servant Isaiah hath walked and upon Ethiopia; naked and barefoot three years for

## NEW TRANSLATION.

3. And JEHOVAH said,  
 "As my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot.  
 "A three years sign and wonder,  
 "In regard to Egypt and to Cush;

walking *without this peculiar prophetic garment*. It does not mean that he was in a state of entire nudity; for all that he was directed to do was to lay this garment—this emblem of his office—aside. It was his *peculiar* garment; and to be stripped of that was to be regarded as naked. The word *naked*, moreover, is used in the Scriptures, not to denote an absolute destitution of clothing, but to denote that the *outer* garment was laid aside. See Note, John xxi. 7. Thus it is said of Saul, (1 Sam. xix. 24,) that he "stripped off his clothes also, and prophecied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day," &c., i. e., he stripped off his royal robes, and was *naked*, or *unclothed* in that respect. He removed his *peculiar* dress as a king, or military chieftain, and appeared in the ordinary dress. It cannot be supposed that the king of Israel would become literally without raiment. So David is said to have danced *naked* before the ark, i. e., with his royal robes laid aside. How *long* Isaiah walked in this manner has been a matter of doubt. See Note on ver. 3. That the prophets were accustomed to use symbolical actions to denote the events which they foretold, there can be no question. See Note, ch. viii. 18. Thus the children of Isaiah, and the names given to them, were significant of important events, ch. viii. 1, 2, 3. See Jeremiah xviii. 1—6; xliii. 8, 9, in both of which places he used emblematic actions to exhibit the events concerning which he prophecied in a striking manner. Thus also the prophets are expressly called "*signs and wonders*." Zech. iii. 8; Ezek. xii. 6.

3. *Like as*. That is, "as Isaiah has gone stripped of his peculiar garment

as a prophet, so shall the Egyptians and Ethiopians be stripped of all that they value and be carried captive into Assyria. They shall be despoiled of all that they possess, and become prisoners to the invading army of the Assyrians." ¶ *Hath walked—three years*. There has been a great deal of difficulty felt in the interpretation of this place, from the strong improbability that Isaiah should have gone in this manner for a space of time so long as our translation expresses. The LXX render this, "as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years, three years shall be for signs and wonders to the Egyptians and Ethiopians." The phrase in the Hebrew, "three years," may either be taken with the preceding part of the sentence, as in our translation, meaning that he actually walked so long; or it may be taken with that which follows, and then it will denote that he was a sign and wonder with reference to the captivity of the Egyptians and Ethiopians; or that by this symbolical action, he, in some way, indicated that they would be carried away captive for that space of time; or as Eben-Ezra and Abarbanel suppose, that he signified that their captivity would commence after three years. Lowth supposes that it means that his walking was for three days, and that the Hebrew text has been corrupted. Vitringa also seems to suppose that this is possible, and that a day was a symbolical sign for a year. Rosenmüller supposes that this prophetic action was continued during three years *at intervals*, so that the subject might be kept before the mind of the people. But the suppo-

4. So shall the king of Assyria lead away the <sup>1</sup> Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians cap-

<sup>1</sup> *captivity of Egypt.*

tives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with *their* buttocks uncovered, to the <sup>2</sup> shame of Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> *nakedness.*

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

4. "So shall the king of Assyria lead the prisoners of Egypt, and the captives of Cush,

"The young and the old,

"Naked and barefoot, with their hind-parts uncovered,

"To the disgrace of Egypt.

sition that this means that the symbolic action of walking naked and barefoot continued for so long a time in any manner, is highly improbable. (1.) The Hebrew does not necessarily require it. It *may* mean simply that his actions were a sign and wonder with reference to a three years' captivity of the Egyptians. (2.) It is in itself improbable that he should so long a time walk about Jerusalem expressly as a sign and wonder, when a much shorter period would have answered the purpose as well. (3.) Such a sign would have hardly met the circumstances of the case. Ashdod was taken. The Assyrian king was advancing. The Jews were in consternation and looking to Egypt for help; and amidst this agitation and alarm, there is the highest improbability that Isaiah would be required to remain a sign and wonder for the long space of three years, when decided action was needed, and when, unless prevented, the Jews would have formed a speedy alliance with the Egyptians. I suppose, therefore, that the entire sense of the phrase will be expressed by translating it "my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot, a three years' sign and wonder;" that is, a sign and indication that a three years' calamity would come upon Egypt and Ethiopia. Whether this means that the calamity should commence in three years from that time, or that it should continue three years, perhaps we cannot determine. Grotius thinks that it means that it would occur after three years; that is, that the war between the Assyrians and Ethiopians

would continue during that time only. In what manner Isaiah indicated this, is not certainly known. The conjecture of Lowth is not improbable, that it was by appearing three *days* naked and barefoot, and that each day denoted a year. Or it may have been that he appeared in this manner for a short period—though but once—and declared that this was the design or purport of the action. ¶ *Upon Egypt, &c.* With reference to; or as a sign in regard to Egypt. It does not mean that he was in Egypt, but that his action had reference to Egypt. ¶ *And upon Ethiopia.* Heb., כּוּשׁ. *Cush.* See Note, ch. xi. 11. Whether this denotes the African Cush or Ethiopia, or whether it refers to the *Cush* in Arabia, cannot be determined. The latter is the more probable supposition, as it is scarcely probable that the Assyrian should extend his conquests south of Egypt so as to subdue the African Ethiopia. Probably his conquests embraced the *Cush* that was situated in the southern regions of Arabia.

4. *So shall, &c.* The emphasis here is on the word *so*. As Isaiah has walked naked, *i. e.*, stripped of his usual clothing, *so* shall the Egyptians and the Ethiopians be led away *stripped* of all their possessions. ¶ *The Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives.* The Egyptians and Ethiopians, or Cushites, were often united in an alliance, and appear to have been when this prophecy was delivered. Thus Nahum iii. 9: Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite.  
Put and Lubim were thy helpers.

5. And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.

6. And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Be-

or, country, Jer. 47. 4.

δ Job 6. 20.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

5. "Then shall they be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their

"And of Egypt their boast.

6. "And the inhabitant of this coast shall say in that day,

"Lo, such is our trust

"To which we fled for succour,

"That we might be delivered from the king of Assyria!

"And how then shall we escape?"

Whether Ethiopia here refers to the African Ethiopia, or to Ethiopia, or Cush, in the south of Arabia, it was near to Egypt, and an alliance could be easily formed and would naturally be formed by them against an invader.

¶ *To the shame of Egypt.* It shall be a

manner. It is remarked by Belzoni, ("Operations and Recent Discoveries in Egypt and Nubia,") that in the figures on the remains of their temples, prisoners are often represented as naked, or only in aprons, with dishevelled hair, and with their hands chained. He also remarks, that on a *bas-relief* on the recently discovered graves of the kings of Thebes, a multitude of *Egyptian* and *Ethiopian* prisoners are represented—showing that Egypt and Ethiopia were sometimes allied, alike in mutual defence and in bondage. Comp. Isa. xlvii. 2; and Nahum iii. 5.

5. *And they shall be afraid.* The Jews, or the party or faction among the Jews that were expecting aid from allied Ethiopia and Egypt. When they shall see them vanquished, they shall apprehend a similar danger to themselves; and they shall be ashamed that they ever confided in a people so little able to aid them, instead of trusting in the arm of God. ¶ *Egypt their glory.* Their boast, as if Egypt was able to save them. The word here rendered *glory* means, properly, ornament,

*praise, honor*; and then it may mean the *object* of glory, or that in which men boast, or confide. That is its sense here. Comp. Isa. x. 12; xiii. 19; Zech. xii. 7.

6. *And the inhabitant.* The dwellers generally. The people. ¶ *Of this isle.* The word *isle* is used here in the sense of *coast*, or *maritime* country, and is evidently applied to Palestine, or the land of Canaan, which is a narrow coast lying on the Mediterranean. That the word is often used in this sense, and may be applied to a maritime country, see Notes, ch. xiii. 22; xli. 1. The connexion here requires us to understand it of Palestine. ¶ *Shall say, &c.* Shall condemn their own folly in trusting in Egypt, and seeking deliverance there. ¶ *And how shall we escape?* They shall be alarmed for their own safety, for the very nation on which they had relied had been made captive. And when the *stronger* had been subdued, how should the feeble and dependent escape a similar overthrow and captivity? All this was designed to show them the folly of trusting in the aid of another nation, and to lead them to trust in the God of their fathers.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

ANALYSIS.—Ch. xxi. 1—10.

The prophecy which commences this chapter occupies the first ten verses. That it relates to Babylon is apparent

## CHAPTER XXI.

1. The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds<sup>a</sup> in the

<sup>a</sup> Zech. 9. 14.

south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

VISION XVI.—Ch. xxi. 1—10. *Babylon.*

## 1. THE ORACLE CONCERNING THE DESERT OF THE SEA.

Like whirlwinds violently rushing along from the south,

from ver. 2 and ver. 9. The object is to foretel the destruction of that city by the Medes and Persians, and the design is the same as in the more extended and minute description of the same event in ch. xiii. xiv. Whether it was delivered at the same time, or at another time, cannot be determined from the prophecy. The purpose, however, of the prophecy is the same as there—to give consolation to the Jews who should be carried captive to that city; to assure them that Babylon would be destroyed, and that they would be delivered from their long and severe bondage. This is indicated in a brief and graphic manner in ver. 10.

This oracle or ode is one of singular beauty. It is distinguished for its brevity, energy, and force; for the variety and the rapidity of the action, and for the striking manner in which the events are made to pass before the mind. It is the language of strong excitement and of alarm; language that expresses rapid and important movements; and language that belongs to great vigor of conception and sublimity in description. In the oracle the prophet supposes himself in Babylon, and the events which are described are made to pass rapidly in vision (see Intro. § 7, 4) before him. He first sees (ver. 1) the dreadful storm coming at a distance (the hostile armies), approaching like a whirlwind, and threatening destruction to everything in its way. He then (ver. 2) hears God's direction to the invading armies; represents himself as made acquainted with the design of the vision; and hears the command of God to Elam (Persia) and Media to go up and commence the siege. Regarding himself as among the exiles in the midst of Babylon, and in view of

these invading hosts, he (ver. 3, 4) represents the influence on his own mind, and describes himself as deeply affected in view of this sudden invasion, and of the calamities that were coming upon Babylon. In ver. 5 he describes the state of the Babylonians. It is done in a most rapid and graphic manner. They are represented first, as preparing the table, making ready for feasting and revelry, setting the watch on the watchtower, and giving themselves up to feasting; and secondly, as suddenly alarmed and called to anoint the shield, and prepare for war. He then (verses 6—9) declares the event, and the way in which the princes of Babylon would be roused from their revelry. But it is described in a very remarkable manner. He does not *narrate* the events, but he represents himself as directed to appoint a watchman (ver. 6) to declare or announce what he should see. That watchman (ver. 7) sees two chariots—representing two nations, coming rapidly onward to execute the orders of God. So rapid is their approach, so terrible their march, that the watchman cries out (ver. 9) that Babylon is fallen, and will be inevitably destroyed. The prophet then (ver. 10) closes the prophecy by an address to the afflicted Jews whom God had “threshed” or punished by sending them captive to Babylon, and with the declaration that this was intended by the Lord of Hosts to be declared unto them. The whole design of the prophecy, therefore, is to console them, and to repeat the assurance given in ch. xiii., xiv., that Babylon would be destroyed, and that they would be delivered from bondage.

1. *The burden.* See Note, ch. xiii. 1.

So it cometh from the desert—  
From a terrible land.

¶ *Of the desert of the sea.* Respecting the desert of the sea. There have been almost as many interpretations of this expression as there have been interpreters. That it means Babylon, or the country about Babylon, there can be no doubt; but the question why this phrase was applied has given rise to a great diversity of opinions. The term *desert*, מִדְבָּר *Midhbôr*, is usually applied to a wilderness, or to a comparatively barren and uncultivated country—a place for flocks and herds, (Ps. lxx. 13; Jer. ix. 9, &c.) or to an actual waste, a sandy desert, (Isa. xxxii. 15; xxxv. 1) and particularly to the deserts of Arabia, (Gen. xiv. 6; xvi. 7; Deut. xi. 24.) It may here be applied to Babylon, either historically, as having been *once* an unreclaimed desert, or by *anticipation*, as descriptive of what it *would be* after it should be destroyed by Cyrus, or possibly both these ideas may have been combined. That it was *once* a desert or vast waste before it was reclaimed by Semiramis is the testimony of all history; that it is *now* a vast waste is the united testimony of all travellers. There is every reason to think that a large part of the country about Babylon was formerly overflowed with water *before* it was reclaimed by dykes, and that the name *desert* is given to it because it was the appropriate and natural description of the place. It was naturally a waste, and when the artificial dykes and dams should be removed it would again be a desert. ¶ *Of the sea.* יָם *Yôm*. There has been also much difference of opinion in regard to this word. But there can be no doubt that it refers to the Euphrates, and to the extensive region of marsh that was covered by its waters. The name *sea*, יָם, is not unfrequently given to a large river, to the Nile, and to the Euphrates. See Note, ch. xi. 15. Comp. ch. xix. 5. Herodotus i. 184, says that "Semiramis confined the Euphrates within its channel by raising great dams against it; for before, it overflowed the whole country like a

sea." And Abydenus in Eusebius (Prepara. Evang. B. ix. p. 457) says, respecting the building of Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, that "it is reported that all this was covered with water, *And was called a sea.*" Comp. Strabo Geog. B. xvi. § 9, 10, and Arrianus de Expedit. Alexandri, L. vii. c. xxi. Cyrus removed these dykes, re-opened the canals, and the waters were suffered to remain, and again converted the whole country into a vast marsh. See Notes on ch. xiii. xiv. ¶ *As whirlwinds.* That is, the army comes with the rapidity of a whirlwind. In ch. viii. 8 (comp. Hab. i. 11) an army is compared to an overflowing and rapid river. Here it is compared to a whirlwind, or a tempest—a comparison that is very striking and impressive. ¶ *In the south.* Whirlwinds or tempests are often in the Scripture represented as coming from the south. The burning sands of Arabia were situated to the south of Palestine, and whirlwinds are described as arising there, and sweeping over the neighbouring regions. Zech. ix. 14; Job xxxvii. 9:

Out of the south cometh the whirlwind,  
And cold out of the north.

So Virgil:

"creberque procellis  
Africus." ÆNEID, i. 85.

In Job i. 19, the whirlwind is represented as coming "from the wilderness;" that is, from the *desert* of Arabia. Comp. Jer. xiii. 24; Hos. xiii. 15. ¶ *So it cometh.* The desolation; or the army that shall lay Babylon waste. ¶ *From the desert.* See ch. xiii. 4, and the Note on that place. God is there represented as collecting the army for the destruction of Babylon "on the mountains," and by mountains are probably denoted the same as is here denoted by the desert. The country of the *Medes* is doubtless intended, which in the view of civilized and refined Babylon was an uncultivated region, or a vast waste or wilderness. ¶ *From a terrible land.* A country rough and



2. A <sup>1</sup> grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer <sup>b</sup> dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go <sup>c</sup> up, O Elam: besiege, O Media: all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.

<sup>1</sup> *hard.*

<sup>b</sup> ch. 33. 1.

<sup>c</sup> ch. 13. 17. Jer. 49. 34.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

2. A grievous vision was revealed to me;—  
The plunderer plundereth, and the robber destroyeth.  
“Go up, O Elam! Besiege, O Media!  
“All its oppression do I make to cease.”

uncultivated; abounding in forests or wastes.

2. *A grievous vision.* Margin, as in Heb., *hard*. On the word *vision* see Note, ch. i. 1. The sense here is, that the vision which the prophet saw was one that indicated great calamity. Vs. 3, 4. ¶ *Is declared unto me.* Is announced; revealed; manifested; that is, is caused to pass before me, and its meaning is made known to me. ¶ *The treacherous dealer.* הַבּוֹזֵז. The perfidious, unfaithful person or people. This is the usual signification of the word; but the connexion here does not seem to require the signification of treachery or perfidy, but of *violence*. The word has this meaning in Hab. ii. 5; and in Prov. xi. 3, 6. It refers here to the Medes, and to the fact that oppression and violence were now to be exercised towards Babylon. Lowth renders this:

“The plunderer is plundered, and the destroyer is destroyed.”

but the authority for so rendering it is doubtful. He seems to suppose that it refers to Babylon. But the Hebrew evidently means, that there is to be plundering and devastation, and that this is to be accomplished by a nation accustomed to it, and which is immediately specified; that is, the united kingdom of Media and Persia. The Chaldee renders it, “They who bring violence, suffer violence; and the plunderers are plundered.” Jarchi says, that the sense of the Hebrew text according to the Chaldee is, “Ah! thou who art violent! there comes another

who will use thee with violence; and thou plunderer, another comes who will plunder thee, even the Medes and Persians, who will destroy and lay waste Babylon.” But the Hebrew text will not bear this interpretation. The sense is, Isaiah saw desolation approaching. This was to be produced by a nation accustomed to it, and who would act towards Babylon in their true character, and would lay it waste. ¶ *Go up.* This is an address of God to Media and Persia. See Note, ch. xiii. 17. ¶ *O Elam.* This was the name of the country originally possessed by the Persians, and was so called from Elam a son of Shem. Gen. x. 22. It was east of the Euphrates, and comprehended properly the mountainous countries of Khusistan and Louristan, called by the Greek writers *Elymais*. In this country was Susa or Shushan, mentioned in Dan. viii. 2. It is here put for Persia in general, and the call on Elam and Media to go up was a call on the united kingdom of the Medes and Persians. ¶ *Besiege.* That is, besiege Babylon. ¶ *O Media.* See Note, ch. xiii. 17. ¶ *All the sighing thereof, &c.* This has been very differently interpreted by expositors. Some understand it (as Rosenmüller, Jerome, Lowth, &c.) as designed to be taken in an *active* sense; that is, all the groaning caused by Babylon in her oppressions of others, and particularly of God's people, would cease. Others refer it to the army of the Medes and Persians, as if *their* sighing should be over; i. e. their fatigues and labors in the conquest of Babylon. Calvin supposes that it

3. Therefore <sup>d</sup> are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it;

I was dismayed at the seeing of it.

4. My <sup>1</sup> heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the <sup>c</sup> night of my pleasure hath he turned <sup>2</sup> into fear unto me.

d ch. 15. 5.

<sup>1</sup> or, my mind wandered.

c Dan. 5. 5, &c.

<sup>2</sup> put.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

3. Therefore are my loins full of pain;  
Anguish hath seized me as the anguish of a woman in travail.  
I am so oppressed that I cannot see;  
I am so dismayed that I cannot hear.
4. My mind is bewildered, terrors affright me;  
The night of my pleasure hath he turned into sorrow.

means that the Lord would be deaf to the sighs of Babylon; that is, he would disregard them, and would bring upon them the threatened certain destruction. The probable meaning is that suggested by Jerome, that God would bring to an end all the sighs and groans which Babylon had caused in a world suffering under her oppressions. Comp. ch. xiv. 7, 8.

3. *Therefore, &c.* In this verse, and the following, the prophet represents himself as in Babylon, and as a witness of the calamities which would come upon the city. He describes the deep sympathy which he feels in her sorrows, and represents himself as deeply affected by her calamities. A similar description occurred in the pain which the prophet represents himself as enduring on account of the calamities of Moab. See Note, ch. xv. 5, xvi. 11. ¶ *My loins, &c.* I am deeply pained. See Note, ch. xvi. 11. ¶ *With pain.* The word here used, *אִתִּי*, denotes properly the pains of parturition, and the whole figure is taken from that. The sense is, that the prophet was filled with the deepest distress, the most acute sorrow and anguish, in view of the calamities which were coming on Babylon. That is, the sufferings of Babylon would be indescribably great and dreadful. See Nah. ii. 11; Ezek. xxx. 4, 9. ¶ *I was bowed down.* Under the deep grief and sorrow produced by these calamities.

¶ *At the hearing of it.* The Hebrew may have this sense, and mean that these things were made to pass before the eye of the prophet, and that the sight oppressed him, and bowed him down. Or more probably the *ו* in the word

is to be taken *privatively*, and means, "I was so bowed down or oppressed, that I could not see, I was so dismayed, that I could not hear;" that is, all his senses were taken away by the greatness of the calamity, and by his sympathetic sufferings. A similar construction occurs in Ps. lxxix. 23: "Let their eyes be darkened that they see not," *אֵינָם רֹאִים*, i. e., *from seeing*. ¶ *I was dismayed.* I was troubled, terrified, affrighted.

4. *My heart panted.* Margin, "My mind wandered." The Hebrew word rendered *panted* (*תָּרַח*, *tārāh*) means to wander about; to stagger; to be giddy; and is applied often to one that staggers by being intoxicated. Applied to the heart, it means that it is disquieted or troubled. ¶ *The night of my pleasure.* There can be no doubt that the prophet here refers to the night of revelry and riot in which Babylon was taken. The prophet calls it the night of his pleasure, not because he delighteth in such scenes, and not because he would be actually there at that time, but because he represents himself as being in Babylon, where he saw this vision of

5. Prepare the table, watch in | ye princes, and anoint the shield.  
the watchtower, eat, drink: arise,

NEW TRANSLATION.

5. Prepare the table,  
Set the watch,  
Eat and drink:—  
Rouse O ye princes,  
Anoint the shield!

its ruin; because, under this figure, he speaks of himself as one of the residents in Babylon; and he therefore uses such language as an inhabitant of Babylon would use. *They* would call it the night of their pleasure, because it was set apart to feasting and revelry. ¶ *Hath he turned into fear.* God has made it a night of consternation and alarm. The prophet here refers to the fact that Babylon would be taken by Cyrus during that night, and that consternation and alarm would suddenly pervade the affrighted and guilty city. See Dan. v.

5. *Prepare the table.* This verse is one of the most striking and remarkable that occurs in this prophecy, or indeed in any part of Isaiah. It is language supposed to be spoken in Babylon. The first direction—perhaps supposed to be that of the king—is to prepare the feast, or the table for the feast. Then follows a direction to set a watch—to make the city safe, so that they may revel without fear. Then a command to eat and drink; and then immediately a sudden order, as if alarmed at an unexpected attack, to arise and anoint the shield;—and to prepare for a defence. The *table* here refers to a feast;—that impious feast mentioned in Dan. v. on the night in which Babylon was taken, and Belshazzar slain. Herodotus (i. 191), Xenophon (Cyp. 7, 5), and Daniel (v.), all agree in the account that Babylon was taken on the night in which the king and his nobles were engaged in feasting and revelry. The words of Xenophon are, "But Cyrus, when he heard that there was to be such a feast in Babylon, in which all the Babylonians would drink and revel through the whole night, on that night,

as soon as it began to grow dark, taking many men, opened the dams into the river;" that is, he opened the dykes which had been made by Semiramis and her successors to confine the water of the Euphrates to one channel, and suffered the waters of the Euphrates again to flow over the country, so that he could enter Babylon beneath its walls, and in the channel of the river. Xenophon has also given the address of Cyrus to the soldiers. "Now," says he, "let us go against them. Many of them are asleep; many of them are intoxicated; and all of them are unfit for battle (*ἀσύντακτοι*)." Herodotus says, (L. i. c. 191,) "It happened that there was a feast among them, and they devoted that time to dances and revelry, and that during that time the city was taken by Cyrus." Compare the account in Daniel, ch. v. ¶ *Watch in the watchtower.* Place a guard so that the city shall be secure. Babylon had on its walls many *towers*, placed at convenient distances (see Notes on ch. xiii.), in which guards were stationed to defend the city, and to give the alarm on any approach of an enemy. Xenophon has given a similar account of the taking of the city. "They, having arranged their guards, drank until light." ¶ *Eat, drink.* Give yourselves to revelry during the night. See Dan. v. ¶ *Arise, ye princes.* This language indicates sudden alarm. It is the language either of the prophet, or more probably the language of the king of Babylon, alarmed at the sudden approach of the enemy, and calling upon his nobles to arm themselves and make a defence. The army of Cyrus entered Babylon by two divisions—one on the

6. For thus hath the LORD said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.  
 7. And he saw a chariot *with* a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, *and* a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed:

## NEW TRANSLATION.

6. For thus hath JEHOVAH said unto me,  
 Go set a watchman, who shall declare what he seeth.  
 7. And he saw a troop, horsemen two abreast;  
 Also a troop of asses, and a troop of camels,  
 And he hearkened with the utmost attention.

north, where the waters of the Euphrates entered the city, and the other by the channel of the Euphrates on the south. Knowing that the city was given up to revelry on that night, they had agreed to imitate the sound of the revellers until they should assemble around the royal palace in the centre of the city. They did so. When the king heard the noise, supposing that it was the sound of a drunken mob, he ordered the gates of the palace to be opened to ascertain the cause of the disturbance. When they were thus opened, the army of Cyrus rushed in, and made an immediate attack on all who were within. It is to this moment that we may suppose the prophet here refers, when the king, aroused and alarmed, would call on his nobles to arm themselves for battle. See Jahn's History of the Hebrew Commonwealth, p. 153, Ed. Andover, 1828. ¶ *Anoint the shield.* That is, prepare for battle. Gesenius supposes that this means to rub over the shield with oil to make the leather more supple, and impenetrable. Comp. 2 Sam. i. 21. The Chaldee renders it, "Fit and polish your arms." The LXX, "Prepare shields." Shields were instruments of defence prepared to ward off the spears and arrows of an enemy in battle. They were made usually of a rim of brass or wood, and over this was drawn a covering of the skin of an ox or other animal, in the manner of a drum-head with us. Occasionally the hide of a rhinoceros or an elephant was used. Burckhardt (Travels in Nubia) says, that the Nubians use the hide of the

hippopotamus for the making of shields. But whatever skin might be used, it was necessary occasionally to rub it over with oil, lest it should become hard and crack, or lest it should become so rigid that an arrow or a sword would easily penetrate it. Jarchi says, that "shields were made of skin, and that they anointed them with the oil of olives." The sense is, "Prepare your arms! Make ready for battle!"

6. *Go, set a watchman.* This was said to Isaiah in the vision. He represents himself as in Babylon, and as hearing God command him to set a watchman on the watch-tower, who would announce what was to come to pass. All this is designed merely to bring the manner of the destruction of the city more vividly before the eye.

7. *And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen.* This passage is very obscure, from the ambiguity of the word רֶכֶב, *rēkhēbh*, *chariot*. Gesenius contends that it should be rendered "*cavalry*," and that it refers to cavalry two abreast hastening to the destruction of the city. The word רֶכֶב denotes, properly, a chariot, or wagon (Judges v. 28); or a collection of wagons (2 Chron. i. 14, viii. 6, ix. 25); and sometimes refers to the *horses* or *men* attached to a chariot. "David houghed all the chariots" (2 Sam. viii. 4); that is, all the *horses* belonging to them. "David killed of the Syrians seven hundred chariots" (2 Sam. x. 18); that is, all the *men* belonging to seven hundred chariots. According to the present Masoretic pointing, the word רֶכֶב does

8. And he cried, <sup>1</sup> A lion: My time, and I am set in my ward: I stand continually upon whole nights: the watchtower in <sup>f</sup> the day-

<sup>1</sup> or, as a lion.

<sup>f</sup> Hab. 2. 1.

<sup>2</sup> or, every night.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

8. And he cried, "Like a lion [they come]!"

"O my lord! I keep my station all the day long,

"And keep my post all night.

not mean, perhaps, anything else than a chariot strictly, but other forms of the word with the same letters denote riders or cavalry. Thus the word רָכָב denotes a horseman (2 Kings ix. 17); a charioteer or driver of a chariot, 1 Kings xxii. 34; Jer. li. 21. The verb רָכָב denotes to ride; and is usually applied to riding on the backs of horses or camels; and the sense here is, that the watchman saw A RIDING, or persons riding two abreast; that is, cavalry, or men borne on horses, and camels, and asses, and hastening to attack the city. ¶ With a couple of horsemen. The word couple, צָמַד, *tzemédh*, means, properly, a yoke or pair; and it means here that the cavalry was seen in pairs, i. e., two abreast. By this was denoted the approach of the army of the Medes and Persians. It is well known that their army abounded with cavalry. ¶ A chariot of asses. Or rather, as above, a riding on asses—or a troop—an approach of men in this manner to battle. Asses were formerly used in war where horses could not be procured. Thus Strabo (xv. 2, § 14) says of the inhabitants of Caramania, "Many use asses for war in the want of horses." And Herodotus (4, 129) says expressly that Darius Hystaspis employed asses in a battle with the Scythians. ¶ And a chariot of camels. A riding on camels. Camels also were used in war, perhaps usually to carry the baggage. See Diod. 2. 54, 3. 44; Liv. 37, 40; Strabo, xvi. 3. They are used for all purposes of burden in the East, and particularly in Arabia, and their rapidity of march makes them of great service in predatory excursions. The Arabs are thus enabled to make a rapid and unexpected descent on their

neighbours, and to carry off their booty before it is possible to overtake them. See Burckhardt's Travels in Syria, &c. ¶ And he hearkened diligently, &c. And he listened with very great attention—as a man set to watch would—that he might ascertain their number, &c.

8. And he cried, A lion. Marg., as a lion. This is the correct rendering. The particle *as*, is not unfrequently omitted. See Isa. lxii. 5; Ps. xi. 1. That is, "I see them approach with the fierceness, rapidity, and terror of a lion." Comp. Rev. x. 3. ¶ My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower, &c. This is the speech of the watchman, and is addressed, not to JEHOVAH, but to him that appointed him. It is designed to show the diligence with which he had attended to the object for which he was appointed. He had watched day and night; he had been unceasing in his observation; and the result was, that now at length he saw the enemy approach like a lion. He saw their numbers, and the rapidity of their movements, and it was certain that Babylon now must fall. The language here used has a striking resemblance to the opening of the 'Agamemnon' of Æschylus, being the speech of the watchman, who had been very long watching upon his tower for the signal which should make known that Troy had fallen. It thus commences:

"For ever thus! O keep me not, ye gods,  
For ever thus, fixed in the lonely tower  
Of Atreus' palace, from whose height I gaze  
O'erwatched and weary, like a night-dog, still  
Fixed to my post; meanwhile the rolling year  
Moves on, and I my watchful vigils keep  
By the cold star-light sheen of spangled skies."

Stimmons, quoted in the Pict. Bib.

¶ I am set in my ward. My place of watching; the place where one keeps watch. It does not mean that he was

9. And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, *with* a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon <sup>g</sup> is fallen, is fallen; and <sup>h</sup> all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the
10. O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared <sup>i</sup> unto you.

<sup>g</sup> Jer. 51. 8, &c. Rev. 14. 8

<sup>h</sup> Jer. 50. 2. <sup>i</sup> *sgn.*

<sup>i</sup> Ezek. 3. 17—19. Acts 20. 26, 27.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

9. "And lo! here cometh a troop of men,  
"Horsemen, two abreast."  
And he answered and said,  
"Fallen, fallen, is Babylon!  
"And all the images of her gods are cast broken to the ground."
10. O my threshing, and the corn of my floor!  
What I have heard from JEHOVAH of hosts, God of Israel,  
That have I declared to you.

confined or imprisoned, but that he had kept his watch station, (מִשְׁמָרָה, from שָׁמַר, to watch, to keep, to attend to.) ¶ *Whole nights.* Marg., *every night.* It means that he had been faithful; he had not left his post day or night.

9. *And, behold.* Lo, this is the result of my watching. I see now destruction coming upon the city. ¶ *A chariot of men.* This place shows that the word *chariot*, רֶכֶב, may denote something else than a wagon or carriage, as a chariot drawn by men cannot be intended. The sense can be expressed perhaps by the word *riding*, "I see a *riding* of men approach;" that is, I see *cavalry* drawing near, or men riding and hastening to the battle. ¶ *With a couple of horsemen.* The word *with* is not in the Hebrew. The meaning is, "I see a riding of men, or cavalry; and they come in pairs, two by two, or two abreast." A part of the sentence is to be supplied from ver. 7. He saw not only horsemen, but riders on asses and camels. ¶ *And he answered.* That is, the watchman answered. The word *answer* in the Scriptures means often merely to commence a discourse after an interval; to begin to speak. Acts v. 8; Dan. ii. 26. ¶ *Babylon is fallen.* That is, her ruin is certain. So many are approaching; such a mighty army is drawing near; and they approach so well prepared for battle, that the ruin

of Babylon is inevitable. The repetition of this declaration that "Babylon is fallen," denotes emphasis and certainty. Comp. Ps. xcii. 9:

For lo, thine enemies, O Lord,  
For lo, thine enemies shall perish.

Ps. xciii. 3:

The floods have lifted up, O Lord;  
The floods have lifted up their waves.

A similar description is given of the fall of Babylon in Jer. l. 32, li. 8; and John has copied this description in the account of the overthrow of the mystical Babylon, Rev. xviii. 1, 2. Babylon was distinguished for its pride, and arrogance, and haughtiness. It became, therefore, the emblem of all that is haughty, and as such is used by John in the Apocalypse; and as such it was a most striking emblem of the pride, and arrogance, and haughtiness, and oppression which have always been evinced by Papal Rome. ¶ *And all the graven images, &c.* Babylon was celebrated for its idolatry, and perhaps was the place where the worship of idols commenced. The principal god worshipped there was Belus, or Bel. See Note on ch. xlv. 1. ¶ *Are broken, &c.* That is, shall be destroyed; or, in spite of its idols, the whole city would be ruined.

10. *O my threshing.* The words *to thresh, to tread down, &c.*, are often used in the Scriptures to denote punishments inflicted on the enemies of God.

An expression like this occurs in Jer. li. 33, in describing the destruction of Babylon. "The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing-floor; it is time to thresh her," &c. In regard to the mode of threshing among the Hebrews, and the pertinency of this image to the destruction of the enemies of God, see Note on Isa. xxviii. 27. Lowth, together with many others, refers this to Babylon, and regards it as an address of God to Babylon in the midst of her punishment. "O thou, the object on which I shall exercise the severity of my discipline; that shall lie under my afflicting hand, like corn spread out upon the floor to be threshed out and winnowed, to separate the chaff from the wheat." But the expression can be applied with more propriety to the Jews; and may be regarded as the language of *tenderness* addressed by God through the prophet to his people, when they should be oppressed and broken down in Babylon. "O thou, my people, who hast been afflicted and crushed; who hast been under my chastening hand, and reduced to these calamities on account of your sins; hear what God has spoken respecting the destruction of Babylon, and your consequent certain deliverance." Thus it is the language of consolation; and is designed, like the prophecies in ch. xiii. xiv., to comfort the Jews when they should be in Babylon, with the certainty that they would be delivered. The language of *tenderness* in which the address is couched, as well as the connexion, seems to demand this interpretation. ¶ *And the corn of my floor.* Heb., "the son of my threshing-floor,"—a Hebraism for grain that was on the floor to be threshed. The word *son* is often used in a peculiar manner among the Hebrews. See Note, Matt. i. 1. ¶ *That which I have heard, &c.* This shows the scope or design of the whole prophecy—to declare to the Jews the destruction that should come upon Babylon, and their consequent deliverance. It was important that they should be *assured* of that deliverance, and hence Isaiah repeats his predictions, and minutely states the manner in which their rescue should be accomplished.

## VISION XVII.

CHAPTER XXI. 11, 12. *Dumah, or Idumea.*

## ANALYSIS.

This prophecy is very obscure. It comprises but two verses. When it was delivered, or on what occasion, or what was its design, it is not easy to determine. Its brevity has contributed much to its obscurity; nor amidst the variety of interpretations which have been proposed, is it possible to ascertain with entire certainty the true explanation. Perhaps no portion of the Scriptures, of equal length, has been subjected to a greater variety of exposition. It is not the design of these Notes to go at length into a detail of opinions which have been proposed, but to state as accurately as possible the sense of the prophet. Those who wish to see at length the opinions which have been entertained on this prophecy, will find them detailed in Vitringa and others.

The prophecy relates evidently to Idumea. It stands in connexion with that immediately preceding respecting Babylon, and it is probable that it was delivered at that time. It has the appearance, in some respects, of being a reply by the prophet to language of *insult* or *taunting* from the Idumeans, and to have been spoken when calamities were coming rapidly on the Jews. But it is not certain that that was the time or the occasion. It is certain only that it is a prediction of calamity succeeding to prosperity—perhaps prosperity coming to the afflicted Hebrews in Babylon, and of calamity to the taunting Idumeans who had exulted over their downfall and captivity, and who are represented as sneeringly inquiring of the prophet what was the prospect in regard to the Jews. This is substantially the view given by Vitringa, Rosenmüller, and Gesenius.

According to this interpretation, the scene is laid in the time of the Babylonish captivity. The prophet is represented as having been placed on a watch-tower, long and anxiously looking for the issue. It is night; *i. e.*, it is a time of calamity, darkness, and distress. In this state of darkness and obscurity,





11. The burden of Dumah. \* He calleth to me out of Seir,  
 Watchman, what of the night?  
 Watchman, what of the night?

\* 1 Chron. i. 30. Jer. 49. 7, &c.  
 Ezek. 36. 2, &c. Ob. i. &c.

NEW TRANSLATION.

VISION XVII.—Ch. xxi. 11, 12. *Idumea.*

11. THE BURDEN OF DUMAH!

One called unto me from Seir.,

“Watchman, what of the night?”

“Watchman, what of the night?”

It is evident from this variety of translation, that the ancient interpreters felt that the prophecy was enigmatical and difficult. It is not easy, in a prophecy so brief, and where there is scarcely any clue to lead us to the historical facts, to give an interpretation that shall be entirely satisfactory and unobjectionable. Perhaps the view given above may be as little liable to objection as any one of the numerous interpretations which have been proposed.

11. *The burden.* See Note, ch. xiii. This word burden naturally leads to the supposition that calamity in some form was contemplated in the prophecy. This is indicated in the prophecy by the word night. ¶ *Of Dumah.* Dumah, דומה, is mentioned in Gen. xxv. 14, 1 Chron. i. 30, as one of the twelve sons of Ishmael. It is known that those sons settled in Arabia, and that the Arabians derive their origin from Ishmael. The name *Dumah*, therefore, properly denotes one of the wandering tribes of the Ishmaelites. The LXX evidently read this as if it had been אֶדוּמָה, Edom, or Idumea — Ἰδουμαία. Jakut mentions two places in Arabia to which the name *Dumah* is given, Dumah Irak, and Dumah Felsen. The former of these, which Gesenius supposes is the place here intended, lies upon the borders of the Syrian desert, and is situated in a valley seven days' journey from Damascus, according to Abulfeda, in Long. 65°, and in N. Latitude 29° 30', and about three and a half days' journey from Medina. Niebuhr mentions Dumah as a station of the Weha-

hites. See Gesenius' Comm. *in loco*. There can be little doubt that the place referred to is situated on the confines of the Arabian and Syrian deserts, and that it is the place called by the Arabians *Duma the stony*, or *Syrian Duma*. Rob. Calmet. It has a fortress, and is a place of strength. Jerome says, “Duma is not the whole province of Idumea, but is a certain region which lies toward the south, and is twenty miles distant from a city of Palestine called Eleutheropolis, near which are the mountains of Seir.” It is evident from the prophecy itself, that Idumea is particularly referred to, for the prophet immediately adds, that the voice came to him from Mount “Seir,” which was the principal mountain of Idumea. Why the name *Dumah* is used to designate that region, has been a matter on which critics have been divided. Vitranga supposes that it is by a play upon the word *Dumah*, because the word *may* be derived from דָּמָם, *Dāmūm*, to be silent, to be still; and that it is used to denote the *silence*, or the *night*, which was about to come upon Idumea; that is, the calamity of which this was a prediction. But this is too far-fetched and fanciful. Kocher supposes that the prophet used the word denoting *silence*, דָּמָם, by a paranomasia, and by derision for אֶדוּמָה, as if Idumea was soon to be reduced to silence, or to destruction. I suppose that he refers to Idumea. The reference to *Seir* proves this. The name *Dumah* is probably used because the wandering tribe of Ishmaelites was at that time in Idumea, or because this city of Dumah was one of the places on

12. The watchman said, The night: if ye will enquire, enquire morning cometh, and also the ye: return, come.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

12. The watchman replieth;—  
 “The morning cometh! *and—ALSO—NIGHT!*  
 “If ye will inquire, inquire!  
 “Return—then come again!”

which the calamities would fall which were impending over Idumea, and concerning which the prophecy was uttered. Idumea, or the country of Edom, is frequently referred to by the prophets. See Jer. xlix. 7—10, 12—18; Ezek. xxxv. 1—4, 7, 9, 14, 15; Joel iii. 19; Amos i. 11; Obad. ver. 1—18; Mal. i. 3, 4. For a description of Idumea, and of the prophecies respecting it, see Notes on Isa. xxxiv. ¶ *He calleth.* One calleth; there is a voice heard by me from Seir. Lowth renders it, “a voice crieth unto me.” But the sense is, that the prophet hears one crying, or calling (קָרָא) to him from the distant mountain. ¶ *To me.* The prophet Isaiah. ¶ *Out of Seir.* The name Seir was given to a mountainous tract or region of country that stretched along from the southern part of the Dead Sea to the eastern branch of the Red Sea, terminating near Ezion-Geber. Mount Hor formed a part of this range of mountains. Esau and his descendants possessed the mountains of Seir, and hence the whole region obtained the name of Edom, or Idumea. Mount Seir was anciently the residence of the *Horites* (Gen. xiv. 6), but Esau made war with them and destroyed them. Comp. Deut. ii. 5, 12; Gen. xxxvi. 8, 9. Here it is put for the country of Idumea, and the sense is, that the whole land, or the inhabitants of the land, are heard by the prophet in a taunting manner asking him what of the night. ¶ *Watchman.* Note, ver. 6. The prophet Isaiah is here referred to. Comp. ch. lii. 8, lvi. 10. He is represented as being in the midst of the calamities that had come upon Judea, and either in Babylon or Jerusalem, and as looking anxiously and patiently for the close of

these calamities. ¶ *What of the night?* Comp. Hab. ii. 1. “How stands the night? What is the prospect? What have you to announce respecting the night? How much of it is passed? And what is the prospect of the dawn?” *Night* here is the emblem of calamity, affliction, oppression, as it often is in the Scriptures (comp. Job xxxv. 10; Micah iii. 6); and it refers here probably to the calamities which had come upon Judea. The inquiry is, How much of that calamity had passed? What was the prospect? How long was it to continue? How far was it to spread? The inquiry is repeated here to denote *intensity* or *emphasis*, manifesting the deep interest which the inquirer had in the result.

12. *The watchman said.* Or rather *said*; indicating that this is the answer which the prophet returned to the inquiry from Idumea. ¶ *The morning cometh.* There are signs of approaching day. The *morning* here is an emblem of prosperity; as the light of the morning succeeds to the darkness of the night. This refers to the deliverance from the captivity at Babylon, and is to be supposed as having been spoken near the time when that captivity was at an end;—or nearly at break of day, after the long night of their bondage. This declaration is to be understood as referring to a different people from those referred to in the expression which immediately follows, “and also the night.” “*The morning cometh—to the captive Jews;—and also the night—to some other people—to wit, the Idumeans.*” It might mean that the morning was to be succeeded by a time of darkness to the same people; but the connexion seems to demand that we

understand it of others. ¶ *And also the night.* A time of calamity and affliction. This is emphatic. It refers to the Idumeans. "The morning cometh to the captive Jews;—it shall be *closely* succeeded by a night—a time of calamity—to the taunting Idumeans." During the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, the Idumeans invaded and took possession of the southern part of Judea. The prophet here refers to the fact, perhaps, that on the return of the Jews to their native land, they would revenge this by expelling them, and by inflicting punishment on the land of Edom. For a full proof that calamities came upon the land of Idumea, see Keith on the Prophecies, Art., Idumea, and Notes on Isa. xxxiv. ¶ *If ye will enquire, enquire.* If you choose to ask anything further in regard to this you can. The sense is probably this: "You Idumeans have asked respecting the *night* in derision and reproach. An answer has been given somewhat agreeably to that inquiry. But if you seriously wish to know anything further respecting the destiny of your land, you can ask me (Isaiah) or any other prophet, and it will be known. But ask it in seriousness and earnestness, and with a suitable regard for the prophetic character and for God. And especially if you wish a more favorable answer to your inquiries, it is to be obtained only by forsaking sin and turning to God, and then you may come with the hope of a brighter prospect for the future." The design of this is, therefore, (1) to *reprove* them for the manner in which they had asked the question; (2) to assure them that God was willing to direct humble and serious inquirers; and (3) to show in what way a favorable answer could be obtained—to wit, by repentance. And this is as true of sinners now as it was then. They often evince the reproachful and taunting spirit which the Idumeans did. They hear only a similar response;—that prosperity and happiness await the Christian, though now in darkness and affliction; and that calamity and destruction are before the guilty. They *might* have the same answer—an answer

that God would bless them and save them, if they would inquire in a humble, serious, and docile manner. ¶ *Return.* Turn from your sins; come back to God, and show respect for him and his declarations. ¶ *Come.* Then come, and you shall be accepted; and the watchman will also announce *morning* as about to dawn on you. Then come to inquire, and God will be your Friend and Protector. This seems to be the sense of this very dark and difficult prophecy. It is brief, enigmatical, and obscure. Yet it is beautiful; and if the sense above given be correct, it contains most weighty and important truth—alike for the afflicted and persecuted friends, and the persecuting and taunting foes of God. With reference to the interpretation here proposed, which supposes, as will have been seen, (1) a state of excited feeling on the part of the Jews towards the Idumeans for the part which they took in the destruction of their city; (2) the prospect of speedy deliverance to the Jews in Babylon; and (3) a consequent desolation and vengeance on the Idumeans for the feelings which they had manifested in the destruction of Jerusalem, see the prophecy of Obadiah, vs. 10—21. In that prophecy these circumstances are all to be found. (1) the hostility of the Edomites against Jerusalem, and the part which they took in the destruction of the city, in vs. 10—14; (2) the fact of the deliverance of the Jews from captivity, in ver. 17; (3) the consequent vengeance upon the Idumeans, vs. 18—21. This remarkable coincidence in an independent prophecy is a strong circumstance to prove that the interpretation above proposed is correct.

## VISION XVIII.

### CHAPTER XXI. 13—17. *Arabia.*

#### ANALYSIS.

The remainder of this chapter is occupied with a single prophecy respecting Arabia. It was *probably* delivered about the time that the former was uttered—during the reign of Hezekiah, and before the invasion of Sennacherib.

13. The burden upon Arabia. | lodge, O ye travelling companies  
In the forest in Arabia shall ye | of Dedanim.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

VISION XVIII.—Ch. xxi. 13—17. *Arabia.*

## 13. THE BURDEN OF ARABIA.

In the forest, in Arabia shall ye lodge,  
O ye caravans of Dedan!

It had reference, I suppose, to Sennacherib; and was designed to foretell the fact that either in his march to attack Judea, or on his return from Egypt, he would pass through Arabia, and perhaps oppress and overthrow some of their clans. At all events, it was to be fulfilled within a year after it was uttered (ver. 16), and refers to some foreign invasion that was to come upon their land. Rosenmüller supposes that it relates to the same period as the prophecy in Jer. xlix. 28, seq., and refers to the time when Nebuchadnezzar sent Nebuzaradan to overrun the lands of the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Philistines, the Arabians, the Idumeans, and some others who had revolted from him, and who had formed an alliance with Zedekiah.

The sentiment of the prophecy is simple—that within a year the country of Arabia would be overrun by a foreign enemy. The form and manner of the prophecy are highly poetic and beautiful. The images are drawn from customs and habits which pertain to the Arabians, and which characterize them to this day. In ver. 13, the prophecy opens with a declaration that the caravans that were accustomed to pass peacefully through Arabia would be arrested by the apprehension of war. They would seek a place of refuge in the forests and fastnesses of the land. Thither also the prophet sees the Arabians flocking, as if to exercise the rites of hospitality, and to minister to the wants of the oppressed and weary travellers. But the reasons why *they* are there, the prophet sees to be that *they* are oppressed and driven out of their land by a foreign invader, and *they* also seek the same places of security and of refuge, vs. 14, 15. All this would be accomplished within

a year (ver. 16), and the result would be, that the inhabitants of Arabia would be greatly diminished, ver. 17.

13. *The burden.* Note, ch. xiii. 1. ¶ *Upon Arabia.* אַרָבִיָּה. This is an unusual form. The title of the prophecies is usually without the א, rendered *upon*. Lowth supposes this whole title to be of doubtful authority, chiefly because it is wanting in most MSS. of the LXX. The LXX connect it with the preceding prophecy respecting Dumah, and make this a part or a continuance of that. The preposition א, *upon*, means here *respecting, concerning*, and is used instead of ב, as in Zech. ix. 1. *Arabia* is a well-known country of western Asia, lying south and south-east of Judea. It was divided into three parts, Arabia Deserta, on the east; Arabia Petrea, lying south of Judea; and Arabia Felix, lying still further south. What part of Arabia is here denoted it may not be easy to determine. It is probable that it was Arabia Petrea, because this lay between Judea and Egypt, and would be exposed to invasion by the Assyrians should they invade Egypt; and because this part of Arabia furnished, more than the others, such retreats and fastnesses as are mentioned in vs. 13—15. ¶ *In the forest.* בַּיָּדָה.

The word בַּיָּדָה, *forest*, usually denotes a grove, a collection of trees, &c. But it may mean here, any place of refuge or of retreat from a pursuing foe; a region of thick underwood; an uncultivated, inaccessible place, where they would be concealed from an invading enemy. ¶ *In Arabia.* The LXX, the Vulgate, and the Chaldee understand this of the *evening*, “In the evening.” בְּעֶרְבָא. The

14. The inhabitants of the land that was thirsty, they prevented of Tema brought <sup>1</sup> water to him with their bread him that fled.

<sup>1</sup> or, *bring ye*.

NEW TRANSLATION.

14. The inhabitants of the land of Tema  
Bring water to meet the thirsty;  
With bread they supply the fugitive.

6

word *אָר*, with different points from those which the Masorites have used here, means *evening*, but there is no necessity of departing from the translation in our English version. The sense would not be materially affected whichever rendering should be preferred. ¶ *Shall ye lodge*. Shall you pass the night. This is the usual signification of the word. But here it may be taken in a larger sense, as denoting that they would remain there; they would pitch their tents there; they would seek a refuge there. The sense I suppose to be this: "O ye travelling caravans of Dedan! ye were accustomed to pass through Arabia, and to find a safe and hospitable entertainment there. You passed through without fear; but now, the Arabians shall be subdued and oppressed; they shall be overrun by a foreign enemy; they shall be unable to show you hospitality and to ensure your safety in their tents, and for fear of the enemy still in the land, you will be obliged to seek a lodging in the inaccessible thickets of the forests." The passage is intended to denote the *change* that had taken place, and to show the *insecurity* for caravans. ¶ *O ye travelling companies*. Ye caravans. *דָּדָן*. This word usually signifies *ways, paths, cross-roads*. But it is here used evidently to denote those who travelled in such ways or paths; that is, caravans of merchants. So it is used in Job vi. 19: "The caravans of Tema." It is well known that in the East it is usual for large companies to travel together, called *caravans*. Arabia Petrea was a great thoroughfare for such companies. ¶ *Of Dedan*. Descendants of Dedan. There are two men of this name mentioned in the Old Testament—the son

of Raamah the son of Cush, mentioned in Gen. x. 7; and the son of Jokshan the son of Abraham by Keturah, Gen. xxv. 3. The descendants of the latter settled in Arabia Petrea, and the descendants of the former near the Persian Gulf. It is not easy to determine which is here intended, though most probably those who dwell near the Persian Gulf, because they are often mentioned as merchants. They dealt in ivory, ebony, &c., and traded much with Tyre (Ezek. xxvii. 21), and doubtless also with Egypt. They are here represented as passing through Arabia Petrea on their way to Egypt, and as compelled by the calamities in the country to find a refuge in its fastnesses and inaccessible places.

14. *Of the land of Tema*. Tema was one of the sons of Ishmael (Gen. xxv. 15); and is supposed to have peopled the city of Thema in Arabia Deserta. The word denotes here one of the tribes of Ishmael, or of the Arabians. Job speaks (vi. 19) of "the troops of Tema," and Jeremiah (xxv. 23) connects Tema and Dedan together. Ptolemy speaks of a city called Themma (Θέμμα) in Arabia Deserta. This city lies, according to D'Anville, in 57° of longitude, and 27° of N. latitude. According to Seetzen, it is on the road usually pursued by caravans from Mecca to Damascus. Lowth renders it, "the southern country," but without authority. The LXX render it, *Θαίμαν*, *Thaiman*. ¶ *Brought water, &c.* Marg., "bring ye." This might be rendered in the imperative, but the connexion seems rather to require that it be read as a declaration that they did so. To bring water to the thirsty was an act of hospitality, and especially in eastern countries, where water was so scarce,

15. For <sup>1</sup> they fled <sup>1</sup> from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.

*l* Job 6. 19, 20. <sup>1</sup> *from the face of, or, for fear.*

16. For thus hath the LORD said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, <sup>m</sup> and all the glory of Kedar <sup>n</sup> shall fail:

*m* Job 7. 1.

*n* ch. 60. 7.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

15. For from the face of swords they flee;  
From the face of the drawn sword;  
And from the face of the bended bow;  
And from the face of the grievous war.
16. For thus saith the Lord unto me:—  
Within a year, as the years of an hireling,  
Shall all the glory of Kedar be consumed,

and where it was of so much consequence to the traveller in the burning sands and deserts. To this day, the Arabians are distinguished for hospitality. The idea is, that there would be great distress; that the inhabitants of the land would be oppressed and pursued by an enemy; and that the Arabians, referred to by the prophet (ver. 13), would be driven from their home, and be dependent on others; that they would wander through the vast deserts, deprived of the necessities of life; and that they would be dependent on the charity of the people of Tema for the supply of their returning wants. ¶ *They prevented.* Our word *prevent* usually means at present, to hinder, to obstruct. But in the Scriptures, and in the old English sense of the word, it means to anticipate, to go before. That is the sense of the word קָדַם here. They anticipated their wants by bread; that is, they supplied them. This was an ancient and an honorable rite of hospitality. Thus Melchizedek (Gen. xiv. 17, 18) is said to have come out and met Abraham, when returning victorious from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, with bread and wine. ¶ *Him that fled.* The inhabitant of the land of Arabia that fled before the invader, perhaps the inhabitants of Kedar (ver. 16), or of some other part of Arabia. It is not meant that the whole land of Arabia would be desolate, but that the invasion

would come upon certain parts of it; and the inhabitants of other portions—as of Tema—would supply the wants of the fugitives.

15. *For they fled.* The inhabitants of one part of the land. ¶ *The grievousness of war.* Heb., the weight (כֶּבֶד), the heaviness, the oppression of war—probably from the calamities that would result from the march of the Assyrian through their land, either on his way to Judea or to Egypt.

16. *Within a year.* What has been said before was figurative. Here the prophet speaks without a metaphor, and fixes the time when this should be accomplished. It is not usual for the prophets to designate the exact time of the fulfilment of their prophecies in this manner. ¶ *According to the years of an hireling.* Exactly; observing the precise time specified. Job vii. 1. See the phrase explained on ch. xvi. 14. ¶ *All the glory.* The beauty, pride, strength, wealth, &c. ¶ *Of Kedar.* Kedar was a son of Ishmael (Gen. xxv. 13). He was the father of the Kedareneans or *Cedrai* mentioned by Pliny (Nat. His. v. 11). They dwelt in the neighbourhood of the Nabatheans, in Arabia Deserta. These people lived in tents, and were a wandering tribe, and it is not possible to fix the precise place of their habitation. They resided, it is supposed, in the south part of Arabia Deserta, and the north part of

17. And the residue of the number of archers,<sup>1</sup> the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the LORD God of Israel hath spoken it.

<sup>1</sup> bows.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

17. And the remaining number of the bowmen,  
The mighty men of the sons of Kedar, shall be diminished:  
For JEHOVAH, God of Israel, hath spoken it.

Arabia Petrea. The name *Kedar* seems to be used sometimes to denote Arabia in general, or Arabia Deserta particularly. See Ps. cxx. 5; Cant. i. 5; Isa. xlii. 11; lx. 7; Jer. ii. 10; xlix. 28; Ezek. xxvii. 21. ¶ *Shall fail.* Shall be consumed, destroyed (הָפַץ).

17. *And the residue of the number.* That is, those who shall be left in the invasion. Or perhaps it may be read, "there shall be a remnant, or a remainder of the number of bowmen; the mighty men of Kedar shall be diminished." ¶ *Of archers.* Hebrew, "of the bow;" that is, of those who use bows in war. The bow and arrow was the common instrument in hunting and in war among the ancients. ¶ *Shall be diminished.* Heb., "shall be made small;" they shall be reduced to a very small number. We cannot indeed determine the precise historical event to which this refers, but the whole connexion and circumstances seem to make it probable that it referred to the invasion by the Assyrian when he went up against Judah, or when he was on his way to Egypt.

### CHAPTER XXII.

#### ANALYSIS OF VERS. 1—14.

This chapter is made up of *two* prophecies; the first comprising the first fourteen verses, and addressed to the city of Jerusalem; and the second (vs. 15—25) relating to the fall of Shebna, the prefect of the palace, and to the promotion of Eliakim in his place. They may have been delivered nearly at the same time, but still the subjects are distinct.

The first (vs. 1—14) relates to Jerusalem. See Note on ver. 1. It has

reference to some period when the city was besieged, and when universal consternation spread among the people. The prophet represents himself as in the city, and as a witness of the consternation. He (1) describes (vs. 1—3) the alarm that prevailed in the city at the approach of the enemy. The inhabitants flee to the tops of the houses, either to observe the enemy, or to make a defence, and the city is filled with alarm and distress, mingled with the tumultuous mirth of a portion who regard defence as hopeless, and who give themselves up to revelry and gluttony, because they apprehend that they must at all events soon die. The prophet then (2) describes (vs. 4—8) his own grief at the impending calamity, and especially at the state of things within the city. It is indeed a day of trouble, and his heart is pained. He portrays the distress; describes those who cause it, and the people engaged in it; and says that the valleys around the city are filled with chariots, and that the horsemen of the enemy have come to the very gate. He then (3) describes the preparations which are made in the city for defence. Vs. 9—11. The inhabitants of the city had endeavoured to repair the breaches of the walls; had even torn down their houses to furnish materials, and had endeavoured to secure the water with which the city was supplied from the enemy; but they had not looked to God as they should have done for protection. The scope of the prophecy therefore is, to reprove them for not looking to God, and also for their revelry in the very midst of their calamities. The prophet then (4) describes the state of morals within the city. Vs. 12—14. It was a time when they should have

## CHAPTER XXII.

1. The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now,

that thou art wholly gone up to the <sup>a</sup> housetops?

<sup>a</sup> Deut. 22. 3.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

VISION XIX.—Ch. xxii. 1—14. *Jerusalem.*

## 1. THE BURDEN OF THE VALLEY OF VISION.

What aileth thee now,

That all thy inhabitants are gone up to the house-tops?

humbled themselves, and looked to God. He called them to fasting and to grief; but they supposed that the city *must* be taken, and that they must die, and a large portion of the inhabitants, despairing of being able to make a successful defence, gave themselves up to riot and drunkenness. They said, "We *must* die soon. Why, therefore, should we not eat and drink and enjoy life as long as it lasts, since it must soon end?" To reprove this was one design of the prophet; and perhaps also to teach the general lesson that men, in view of the certainty of death, should *not* madly and foolishly give themselves to sensual indulgence and to sin.

There has been a difference of opinion in regard to the event to which this prophecy refers. Most have supposed that it relates to the invasion by Sennacherib; others have supposed that it relates to the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar. Vitringa and Lowth suppose that the prophet had *both* events in view; the former in vs. 1—5, and the latter in the remainder of the prophecy. But it is not probable that it has a twofold reference. It has the appearance of referring to a *single* calamity; and this mode of interpretation should not be departed from without manifest necessity. The general aspect of the prophecy has reference, I think, to the invasion by Sennacherib. He came near the city; the city was filled with alarm; and Hezekiah prepared himself to make as firm a stand against him as possible, and put the city in the best possible state of defence. The description in vs. 9—11 of the preparation made for defence agrees exactly with the account given of the defence which Hezekiah made against Sennacherib in

2 Chron. xxxii. 2; and particularly in regard to the effort made to secure the water of Siloam for the use of the city, and to prevent the Assyrians from obtaining it. In 2 Chron. xxxii. 2, seq., we are told that Hezekiah took measures to stop all the fountains of water without the city, and the brook (Kedron), in order that the Assyrians under Sennacherib should not find water; and that he repaired the walls, and built new towers of defence in the city, and placed guards upon them. These circumstances of *coincidence* between the history and the prophecy, show conclusively, I think, that the reference is entirely to the invasion under Sennacherib. This occurred 710 years before Christ.

1. *The burden.* Note, ch. xiii. 1. ¶ *The valley.* <sup>Septuagint,</sup> *φάραγος*, *valley*. Chaldee, "The burden of the prophecy respecting the city which dwells (*i. e.*, is built) in the valley, which the prophets have prophesied concerning it." There can be no doubt that Jerusalem is intended. See vs. 9, 10. It is not usual to call it a *valley*, but it may be so called, either (1) because there were several valleys *within* the city and adjacent to it, as the vale between Mount Zion and Moriah; the vale between Mount Moriah and Mount Ophel; between these and Mount Bezetha; and the valley of Jehoshaphat, the valley of the brook of Kedron, &c., without the walls of the city: or (2) more probably it was called a *valley* in reference to its being *encompassed with hills*, rising to a considerable elevation above the city. Thus Mount Olivet was on the east, and overlooked the city. Thus in Ps. cxxv. 2, it is said, "As the mountains are *round about*



2. Thou that art full of stirs, a | thy slain *men are* not slain with  
tumultuous city, a <sup>b</sup> joyous city: | the sword, nor dead in battle.

<sup>b</sup> ch. 32. 13.

NEW TRANSLATION.

2. O thou, full of stirs,  
A city tumultuous,  
A city joyous,  
Thy slain are not the slain of the sword,  
And not the dead of battle.

Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people." Jerusalem is also called a *valley*, and a *plain*, in Jer. xxi. 13: "Behold I am against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain, saith the Lord." Thus it is described in Reland's Palestine, "the holy city is placed in the midst of valleys and hills." See *Gesenius*. It was common with Isaiah and the other prophets to designate Jerusalem and other places, not by their proper names, but by some appellation that would be descriptive. See ch. xxi. 1; xxix. 1. ¶ *Of vision*. Note, ch. i. 1. The word here means that Jerusalem was eminently the place where God made known his will to the prophets, and manifested himself to his people by *visions*. ¶ *What aileth thee now*. What is the cause of the commotion and tumult that exists in the city? The prophet throws himself at once into the midst of the excitement; sees the agitation and tumult, and the preparations for defence which were made, and asks the *cause* of all this confusion. ¶ *That thou art*. That the inhabitants of the city, that old and young, that all classes of the people fled to the house-tops, so much that it might be said that all the city had gone up. ¶ *To the housetops?* Houses in the East were built in a uniform manner in ancient times, and are so to this day. See a description of the mode of building in my Notes on Matt. ix. 1, seq. The roofs were always flat, and were made either of earth that was trodden hard, or with large flat stones. This roof was surrounded with a balustrade (Deut. xxii. 8), and furnished a convenient place for walking, or even eat-

ing and sleeping. Whenever, therefore, anything was to be seen in the street, or at a distance; or when there was any cause of alarm, they would naturally resort to the roof of the house. When there was a tower in the city, the inhabitants fled to that, and took refuge on its top, or roof. See Judges ix. 50-53. The image here is, therefore, one of consternation and alarm, as if on the sudden approach of an enemy.

2. *Thou that art full of stirs*. Of tumult; of commotion; of alarm. Or perhaps this whole description may mean that it was formerly a city distinguished for the hum of business, for pleasure—a busy, active, enterprising city. The Hebrew will bear this, but I prefer the former interpretation, as indicating mingled alarm and consternation, and at the same time a disposition to engage in riot and revelry—indicating more clearly the real character of the people. ¶ *A joyous city*. A city exulting; rejoicing; given to pleasure and to riot. See the description of Nineveh in Zeph. ii. 15. It is remarkable that the prophet has blended these things together, and has spoken of the tumult, the alarm, and the rejoicing, in the same breath. This may be either because it was the *general* character of the city thus to be full of revelry, dissipation, and riot, and he designates it by that which *usually* and *appropriately* described it; or because it was, even then, notwithstanding the general consternation and alarm, given up to revelry, and the rather on account of the approaching danger. So he describes the city in vs. 12, 13, where he says, that when God called them to seriousness

3. All thy rulers are fled <sup>c</sup> together, they are bound <sup>1</sup> by the

c 2 Kings 25. 5, 11.

<sup>1</sup> of the bow.

archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, *which* have fled from far.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

3. All thy leaders have fled together;  
They are bound [by fear] from using the bow;  
All that were found in thee were bound alike—  
They had fled [to thee] from afar.

and fasting, they had given themselves up to dissipation, under the assurance that they must inevitably be destroyed. ¶ *Thy slain men are not slain with the sword.* The words *thy slain* לְרֹאשֵׁי, here seem to be intended to be applied to the soldiers on whom the defence of the city rested; and to mean those who had not died an honorable death in the city in its defence, but who had fled in consternation, and who were either taken in their flight and made captive, or who were pursued and put to death in an ignominious flight. To be slain with the sword here is equivalent to being slain in an honorable engagement with the enemy. But here the prophet speaks of their consternation, their cowardice, and of their being partly trampled down in their hasty and ignominious flight, by each other, and thus slain; and partly of the fugitives being overtaken by the enemy, and thus put to death. Perhaps also there may be the idea that many might die by famine or the pestilence; but the main idea seems to be that of cowardice, pusillanimity, and the ignominious death that would result.

3. *All thy rulers are fled together.* The general idea in this verse is plain. It is designed to describe the consternation which would take place at the approach of the invader, and especially the timidity and flight of those on whom the city relied for protection and defence. Hence, instead of entering calmly and firmly on the work of defence, no inconsiderable part of the rulers of the city are represented as fleeing in a cowardly manner from the city, and refusing to remain to protect the capital. The word rendered *thy*

*rulers*, לְרֹאשֵׁי, denotes either judges, magistrates, or civil rulers of the city; or military leaders. It is most usually applied to the latter, Josh. x. 24; Judg. xi. 6, 11; Dan. xi. 18, and probably refers here to military commanders. ¶ *They are bound by the archers.* Heb. as in the margin, "of the bow." There has been a great variety in the interpretation of this passage. The LXX read it, "and the captives are bound with severity," σκληρῶς δεδεμένοι εἰσι. The Chaldee, "and the captives migrate from before the extending of the bow." Jarchi renders it, "who from the fear of arrows were bound so that they shut themselves up in the city." Houbigant and Lowth render it, "they are fled from the bow," reading it לְרֹאשֵׁי, instead of the present Hebrew text לְרֹאשֵׁי, but without the slightest authority. Vitringa renders it, "they were bound from treading, i. e., extending, or using the bow;" or "they were bound by those who tread, i. e., use the bow," indicating that they were so bound that they could not use the bow in defence of the city. I think that the *connexion* here requires that the word לְרֹאשֵׁי should be used in the sense of being bound or influenced by fear;—they were so intimidated, so much under the influence of terror, so entirely unmanned, and disabled by alarm, that they could not use the bow; or this was caused by the bow, i. e., by the bowmen or archers who came to attack the city. It is true that no other instance occurs in which the word is used in precisely this sense, but instances in abundance occur where strong passion, as of fear, &c., is represented as having a controlling or dis-

4. Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will <sup>1</sup>weep bitterly, <sup>d</sup>labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.

<sup>1</sup> *be bitter in weeping.*  
d Jer. 4. 19; 9. 1. Lam. 1. 2.

5. For *it is* a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the LORD God of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

4. Wherefore I said, Turn away from me: I will weep bitterly; Strive not to comfort me, on account of the desolation of the daughter of my people.
5. For this is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity, From the Lord, JEHOVAH of hosts, in the valley of vision; [A day of] breaking down the wall, And of crying to the mountain.

abling influence over the mind and body; where it takes away the energy of the soul, and makes one timid, feeble, helpless, *as if* bound with cords, or made captive. The word *נָחַץ* commonly means to bind with cords, or to fetter; to imprison, Gen. xlii. 24; Judg. xvi. 5; 2 Kings xvii. 4; to yoke, 1 Sam. vi. 7, 10; and then to *bind* with a *vow*, Num. xxx. 3. Hence it means to *bind* with fear or consternation. ¶ *By the archers.* Heb. *מִן הַקֶּשֶׁת*—*from the bow*. It may be taken, as in ch. xxi. 17, for archers or bowmen; and it may mean that they were so bound by fear that they *could* not use the bow—using the preposition *בְּ* in a negative signification, as it often is; or it may mean that they were intimidated and unmanned by the bowmen, or from fear of the archers who approached the city. The former I take to be the meaning. ¶ *Which have fled from far.* That is, either they have fled far away; or they had fled *from* far in order to reach Jerusalem as a place of safety. Probably the latter is the sense.

4. *Look away from me.* Do not look upon me: an indication of deep grief, for sorrow seeks to be alone, and deep grief avoids publicity and exposure. ¶ *I will weep bitterly.* Heb., I will be bitter in weeping. Thus we speak of

*bitter* sorrow, indicating excessive grief. See Note, ch. xv. 5; comp. Micah i. 8, 9; Jer. xiii. 17; xiv. 17; Lam. i. 16; ii. 11. ¶ *Labor not.* The sense is, "My grief is so great that I cannot be comforted. There are no topics of consolation that can be presented. I must be alone, and allowed to indulge in deep and overwhelming sorrow at the calamities that are coming upon my nation and people." ¶ *Because of the spoiling.* The desolation; the ruin that is coming upon them. ¶ *The daughter of my people.* Jerusalem. See Note, ch. i. 8; comp. Jer. iv. 11; vi. 14; viii. 19, 21, 22; Lam. ii. 11; iv. 3, 6, 10.

5. *For it is a day of trouble.* A time of tumult, when all things are confounded, and unsettled. ¶ *And of treading down.* When our enemies trample on everything sacred and dear to us, and endanger all our best interests. See Ps. xlv. 5; Luke xxi. 24. ¶ *And of perplexity.* In which we know not what to do. We are embarrassed, and know not where to look for relief. ¶ *By the LORD God of Hosts.* That is, he is the efficient cause of all this. It has come upon us under his providence, and by his direction. Note, ch. x. 5. ¶ *In the valley of vision.* In Jerusalem. Note, ver. 1. Vitringa supposes that this was called the valley

6. And Elam <sup>c</sup> bare the quiver men, and Kir uncovered <sup>1</sup> the with chariots of men and horse- shield.

<sup>c</sup> Jer. 49. 35.

<sup>1</sup> made naked.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

6. And Elam beareth the quiver, with a troop of men who are horsemen, And Kir uncovereth the shield.

of vision, because the prophets had a school in the valley that was near the temple. But the more probable reason is that given in the Notes on ver. 1. Phoca, as quoted by Reland (Palæst. p. 839), says that Jerusalem was "admirable in this respect, that it seemed to be at the same time elevated and depressed—elevated in respect to Judea in general, but depressed in respect to the surrounding hills. ¶ *Breaking down the walls.* There has been much variety in the interpretation of this place. The LXX render it; "In the valley of Zion they wander, from the least to the greatest, they wander upon the mountains." See a discussion of the various senses which the Hebrew phrase may admit, in Rosenmüller and Gesenius. Probably our common version has given the true sense, and the reference is to the fact that the walls of the city became thrown down, either in the siege, or from some other cause. I suppose that this refers to the invasion of Sennacherib, and though his army was destroyed, and he was unable to take the city, yet there is no improbability in the supposition that he made some breaches in the walls. Indeed this is implied in the account in 2 Chron. xxxii. 5. ¶ *And of crying to the mountains.* Either for help, or more probably of such a loud lamentation that it reached the surrounding hills, and was re-echoed back to the city. Or, perhaps, it may mean that the shout or clamor of those engaged in building the walls, or defending them, reached to the mountains. Comp. Virg. *Æneid.* iv. 668:

resonat magnis plangoribus æther.

But I prefer the former interpretation. Rosenmüller renders it, "a cry—to the

mountains!" That is, a cry among the people to escape to the hills, and to seek refuge in the caves and fastnesses there. Comp. Judges vi. 2; Matt. xxiv. 16; Mark xiii. 14.

6 *And Elam.* The southern part of Persia, perhaps here used to denote Persia in general. See Note, ch. xxi. 2. Elam, or Persia, was at this time subject to Assyria, and their forces were united, doubtless, in the invasion of Judea. ¶ *Bare the quiver.* A quiver is a case in which arrows are carried. This was usually hung upon the shoulders, and thus borne by the soldier when he entered into battle. By the expression here is meant that Elam was engaged in the siege, and was distinguished particularly for skill in shooting arrows. That the Elamites were thus distinguished for the use of the bow, is apparent from Ezek. xxxii. 24, and Jer. xlix. 35. ¶ *With chariots of men and horsemen.* With cavalry, (Note, ch. xxi. 7;) of men who were horsemen. Lowth proposes to read instead of "men," אֲרָם, "the Syrian," by reading אֲרָם, Syria, instead of אֲרָם, man, by the change of the single letter ט into ר. This mistake might have been easily made where the letters are so much alike, and it would suit the parallelism of the passage, but there is no authority of MSS. or versions for the change. The words "chariots of men—horsemen," I understand here, as in ch. xxi. 7, to mean a troop or riding of men who were horsemen. Archers often rode in this manner. The Scythians usually fought on horseback with bows and arrows. ¶ *Kir.* Kir was a city of Media, where the river Kyrus or Cyrus flows. 2 Kings xvi. 9; Amos i. 5; ix. 7. This was evidently then connected with

7. And it shall come to pass, *that* <sup>1</sup> thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at <sup>2</sup> the gate.

<sup>1</sup> the choice of thy.

<sup>2</sup> or, toward.

8. And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house <sup>f</sup> of the forest.

7. 2; 10. 17.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

7 And thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots,  
And the cavalry shall station themselves at the gate.

8. And the covering of Judah shall be removed,  
And in that day thou shalt look to the arsenal of the house of the forest.

the Assyrian monarchy; and was engaged with it in the invasion of Judea. Perhaps the name *Kir* was given to a region, or province lying on the river Cyrus, or Kyrus. This river unites with the Araxes, and falls into the Caspian Sea. The idea here is, that Media was engaged in the siege. ¶ *Uncovered the shield.* Was with them in the war; composed a part of the army of the Assyrian. See Note, xxi. 5. Shields were probably protected during a march, or when not in use, by a covering of cloth. They were made either of metal or of skin, and the object in covering them was to preserve the metal untarnished, or to keep the shield from injury. To *uncover the shield*, therefore, was to prepare for battle. The Medes were subject to the Assyrians in the time of Hezekiah, (2 Kings xvi. 9; xvii. 6.) and of course in the time of the invasion of Judea by Sennacherib.

7. *Thy choicest valleys.* Heb. "The choice of thy valleys;" meaning the most fertile and the most valued lands in the vicinity of the city. Probably it means that the rich and fertile vales around Jerusalem would be occupied by the armies of the Assyrian monarch. What occurs in this verse and the following verses to ver. 14, is a prophetic description of what is presented historically in Isa. xxxvi. and 2 Chron. xxxii. The coincidence is so exact, that it leaves no room to doubt that the in-

vasion here described was that which took place under Sennacherib. ¶ *Set themselves in array.* Heb. "Placing shall place themselves;" i. e., they shall be drawn up for battle; they shall besiege the city, and guard it from all ingress or egress. Rabshakeh, sent by Sennacherib to besiege the city, took his station at the upper pool, and was so near the city that he could converse with the people on the walls. Isa. xxxvi. 11—13.

8. *And he discovered.* Heb., He made naked, or bare, חָשַׁף. The expression "he discovered," means simply that it was uncovered, without designating the agent. ¶ *The covering of Judah.* The word here used (כִּפְתָּן) denotes properly a covering, and is applied to the curtain or veil that was before the tabernacle, Ex. xxvi. 36, xxxix. 38; and to the curtain that was before the gate of the court, Ex. xxxv. 17, xxxix. 40. The LXX understand it of the gates of Judah, "They revealed the gates (τὰς πύλας) of Judah." Many have understood it of the defences, ramparts or fortifications of Judah, meaning that they were laid open to public view, i. e., were demolished. But the more probable meaning perhaps is, that the invading army exposed Judah to every kind of reproach; stripped off everything that was designed to be ornamental in the land; and thus by the figure of exposing one to reproach and

9. Ye <sup>s</sup> have seen also the lower pool.

breaches of the city of David, that they are many: and ye gathered together the waters of the

*g* 2 Chron. 32. 4, 5.

10. And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

9. And the breaches of the city of David, ye shall see that they are many, And ye shall collect the waters of the lower pool.

10. And the houses in Jerusalem ye number, And ye break down the houses to fortify the wall.

shame by stripping off all his clothes, exposed Judah in every part to reproach. Sennacherib actually came up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and took them and dismantled them. 2 Kings xviii. 13; Isa. xxxvi. 1. The land was thus laid bare, and unprotected. ¶ *And thou didst look.* Thou Judah; or the king of Judah. Thou didst cast thine eyes to that armor as the last resort, and as the only hope of defence. ¶ *To the armour.* Or rather perhaps the *armory, the arsenal*, פָּרָסָה. The LXX render it, "to the choice houses of the city." Comp. Neh. iii. 19. ¶ *Of the house of the forest.* This was built within the city, and was called the house of the forest of Lebanon, probably from the great quantity of cedar from Lebanon which was employed in building it. 1 Kings vii. 2—8. In this house, Solomon laid up large quantities of munitions of war, (1 Kings x. 16, 17); and this vast store-house was now the principal reliance of Hezekiah against the invading forces of Sennacherib.

9. *Ye have seen, &c.* You who are inhabitants of the city. These breaches in the wall have been made, and you cannot be ignorant of them. That such breaches were actually made, see 2 Chron. xxxii. 5. ¶ *Of the city of David.* Of Jerusalem, so called because it was the royal residence of David. Zion was usually called the city of David, but the name was given also to the entire city. ¶ *And ye gathered together &c.* That is, Heze-

kiah and the people of the city collected those waters. ¶ *Of the lower pool.* Note, ch. vii. 3. That is, they contrived to *retain* the waters of the pool or fountain *within* the city. The surplus waters usually flowed under the walls into the valley of the brook Kedron. Instead of that, Hezekiah endeavoured to retain them *within* the city. This he did probably for two purposes, (1) to cut off the Assyrians from the supply of water; and (2) to retain *all* the water in the city to supply the inhabitants during the siege. See 2 Chron. xxxii. 4, where it is expressly declared that Hezekiah took this measure to distress the Assyrians.

10. *And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem.* That is, you have taken an estimate of their number, so as to ascertain how many can be spared to be pulled down to repair the walls; or you have made an estimate of the amount of materials for repairing the walls which would be furnished by pulling down the houses in Jerusalem. ¶ *To fortify the wall.* The houses in Jerusalem were built of stone, and therefore they would furnish appropriate materials for repairing the walls of the city. In 2 Chron. xxxii. 5, it is said that Hezekiah not only repaired the broken walls of the city on the approach of Sennacherib, but "raised up the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo, in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance."

11. Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago.

12. And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call<sup>h</sup> to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness,<sup>i</sup> and to girding with sackcloth:

<sup>A</sup> Joel 1. 13.

<sup>f</sup> Job 1. 20. <sup>Mic.</sup> 1. 16.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

11. And ye make a reservoir between the two walls  
For the waters of the old pool:  
But ye look not to him who hath made this;  
And ye do not regard him who hath formed it long ago.
12. And in such a day the Lord JEHOVAH of hosts calleth  
To weeping, and to lamentation;  
And to baldness, and to girding of sackcloth;

11. *Ye made also a ditch, &c.* That is, they made a *reservoir* to retain the water. The word *ditch* here means a reservoir, a lake, a pond, or a place for the collecting of waters. ¶ *Between the two walls.* Hezekiah built one of these walls himself, 2 Chron. xxxii. 5; Comp. 2 Kings xxv. 4; and Jer. xxxix. 4. The truth seems to have been that Jerusalem was supplied with water from two fountains, one of which was called the fountain of *Gihon* (2 Chron. xxxii. 30); and the other is that which is so frequently mentioned as the fountain or pool of *Siloam*. The former flowed in the western part of the city, and was anciently *without* the walls. Thus, in time of a siege the supply of water from this source would be cut off from the inhabitants, and it would be of great advantage to the enemy. In order to prevent this, Hezekiah ran a wall *around* this fountain, connecting the wall at each end with the old wall of the city, and forming the reservoir *between* these two walls. It thus happened that on that part of the city Jerusalem had a double wall. This was deemed a work of great utility, and was one of the acts which particularly distinguished the reign of Hezekiah. It is not only mentioned in the Books of Kings (ch. xx. 20) and Chronicles (xxxii. 2—5, 30), but the son of Sirach has also mentioned it in his encomium on Hezekiah: "Hezekiah fortified his

city, and brought in water into the midst thereof; he digged the hard rock with iron, and made wells for water." Ecclus. xlviii. 17. ¶ *Of the old pool.* The pool with which the city was formerly supplied with water, probably used extensively before the waters of *Siloam* had been collected in reservoirs for the use of the city. ¶ *But ye have not looked.* You have not relied on God. You have depended on your own resources, and on the defences which you have been making against the enemy. It is right to make these preparations; but, when made, your sole reliance should be on God. This probably described the *general* character of the people. Hezekiah, however, was a pious man, and doubtless really depended on the aid of God. ¶ *The maker thereof.* God; by whose command and aid all these defences are made; who has given you ability and skill to make them. Or perhaps it may refer particularly to the *pool*, and mean that God had made *it*, and that they should rely on him. ¶ *Neither had respect.* Neither honored him, or relied on him as you should have done. ¶ *Long ago.* God had made this fountain, and it had long been a supply to the city. He had a claim, therefore, to their gratitude and respect. *He* had made it; and *he* could easily dry it up.

12. *And in that day.* In the invasion of Sennacherib. That is, that *would be*

13. And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let <sup>k</sup> us eat and drink; for to-morrow we shall die.

<sup>k</sup> ch. 56. 12.

14. And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord God of hosts.

#### NEW

13. And lo! joy and rejoicing,  
Killing oxen, and slaying sheep,  
Eating flesh, and drinking wine [saying]—  
“Let us eat and drink,  
“For to-morrow we die.”

14. Therefore it hath been revealed in mine ears by JEHOVAH of hosts,  
This iniquity shall not be expiated for you till ye die,  
Saith the Lord, JEHOVAH of hosts!

a time when Jehovah would call them to this. It might be rendered, “and the Lord, JEHOVAH of hosts, *on such a day calls to weeping*,” intimating that in such a time it was a general truth that God required those who were thus afflicted to weep, and fast, and pray. ¶ *Call to weeping.* That is, by his Providence; or, it was *proper* that at such a time they should weep. Affliction, oppression, and calamity are indications from God *always* that we ought to be humbled, and to prostrate ourselves before Him. ¶ *And to baldness.* To plucking off the hair, or shaving the head—one of the emblems of grief among the ancients. Job i. 20; Micah i. 16. ¶ *And to girding with sackcloth.* See Note, ch. iii. 24.

13. *And behold, &c.* When they ought to give themselves to fasting and prayer, they gave themselves up to revelry and riot. ¶ *Slaying oxen, &c.* Not for purposes of sacrifice, but for feasting. ¶ *Let us eat and drink.* Saying, let us eat and drink. That is, it is inevitable that we must soon die. The army of the Assyrian is approaching. The city cannot stand against him. It is in vain to make a defence; and in vain to call upon God. Since we *must* soon die, we may as well enjoy life while it lasts, and give ourselves to feasting, and consume the food which we have. This is always the language of the epicure; and it seems to be the

language of no small part of the world. Probably if the *real* feelings of the great mass of worldly men were expressed, they could not be better expressed than in the language of Isaiah: “We must soon die at all events. We cannot avoid that; it is the common lot of all. And since we have been sent into a dying world; since we had no agency in being placed here; since it is impossible to prevent this doom, we may as well *enjoy* life while it lasts, and give ourselves to pleasure, dissipation, and revelry. While we can, we will take our comfort, and when death comes we will submit to it, simply because we cannot avoid it.” Thus, while God calls men to repentance and seriousness; while he would lead them to himself for true happiness; and while he would urge them, by the consideration that this life is short, to prepare for a better; and while he designs that the nearness of death should lead them to think solemnly of it, they abuse all his mercies, endeavour to thwart all his arrangements, and live and die like the brutes. This passage is quoted by Paul in his argument on the subject of the resurrection, in 1 Cor. xv. 32.

14. *It was revealed in mine ears, &c.* That is, JEHOVAH revealed it to me. ¶ *Surely this iniquity.* This sin of refusing to trust God; and this sin of giving yourselves to riot when he called you to weeping and to mourning; this



15. Thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, *even* unto Shebna, <sup>1</sup> which is over the house, *and say*,  
 12 Kings 18. 37.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

VISION XX.—Ch. xxii. 15—25. *Shebna.*

15. Thus saith the Lord, JEHOVAH of hosts,  
 Go, get thee unto this Treasurer,  
 To Shebna, who is over the palace [and say],

sin of refusing to make preparation for what is before you, and of being ready for death should it come. Few sins can be more aggravated than that of revelry and riot, of thoughtlessness and mirth over the grave. Nothing can show a more decided disregard of God, and nothing a more grovelling and sensual disposition. And yet it is the common sin of a foolish and wicked world; and there can be nothing more melancholy than that a world hastening to the grave should give itself to riot and dissipation; nothing more certainly shows the deep and dreadful degradation of the race, than the actual conduct of the thoughtless and the pleasure-loving world. One would think that the prospect of a speedy and certain death would deter men from sin. But it is found that the very reverse is true. The nearer men approach death, the more reckless and abandoned do they often become. The *strength* and *power* of depravity is thus shown in the fact that men CAN sin thus when near the grave, and when every consideration should deter them from it. ¶ *Shall not be purged from you.* Shall not be pardoned or removed. You shall continue thus till you die. See Note, ch. iv. 4. The Chaldee renders this, "the second death." The sense is, that the sin was so great that it should not be expiated or pardoned, but that they should die unforgiven. The word rendered purged (עָרַב) is that which commonly denotes *atonement*, or *expiation*. But it is here used in a large sense, to denote that it should never be forgiven.

## VISION XX.

## ANALYSIS OF VERS. 15—25.

The remainder of this chapter (vs. 15—25) is occupied with a prediction

respecting Shebna, and the promotion of Eliakim in his place. From the prophecy itself it appears that Shebna was prefect of the palace (ver. 15), or that he was in the highest authority in the time of Hezekiah. That he was an unprincipled ruler is evident from the prophecy, and hence Isaiah was directed to predict his fall, and the elevation of another in his place. Whether this Shebna is the same that is mentioned in ch. xxxvi. is not known. But the probability is, that it was not the same person. For (1) the Shebna there mentioned is called a *Scribe*, (ver. 22,) and (2) that was *after* the fall of Shebna here mentioned, for it occurred after Eliakim had been placed over the palace. Eliakim was then in office, and was sent on that embassy to Sennacherib. Ch. xxxvi. 2, 22; xxxvii. 2. The probability is, therefore, that this was some other man of the same name, unless it may have been that *Shebna*, after being degraded from the rank of prefect of the palace, or prime minister, became a *Scribe*, or had an inferior office under Eliakim, which is scarcely probable. The prophecy contains the following things: (1) A *command* to Isaiah to go to Shebna, and to reprove him for his self-confidence in his sin, vs. 15, 16; (2) a declaration that he should be carried captive to a foreign land, vs. 17, 18; (3) a declaration that he should be deposed and succeeded by Eliakim, v. 20; (4) a description of the character and honors of Eliakim, and his qualifications for the office, vs. 21—24; and (5) a confirmation of the whole prophecy, or a summing up the whole in a single declaration, ver. 25.

15. Thus saith the LORD God of

16. What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here? that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, <sup>1</sup> as he that heweth him out

1 or, O he.

NEW TRANSLATION.

16. "What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here?"

"That thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre?"

"Hewing out thy sepulchre on high,

"Graving for thyself a habitation in the rock?"

*hosts.* See Note, ch. i. 9. This solemn declaration of Isaiah is designed to attract the attention of the nation, and to show the authority by which he acted. It was not by his own authority; it was not by his conviction of the wickedness of Shebna, but it was by a solemn command from JEHOVAH. His message, therefore, demanded respect; and his prediction was sure to be fulfilled. ¶ *Go, get thee, &c.* Heb., "Go, come to," &c. This was one of the instances in which the prophets were directed to go personally, and even at the hazard of their life, to those who were high in office, and to denounce on them the divine judgment for their sins.

¶ *Unto this treasurer.* תִּשְׁבְּנָה. The Vulgate renders this, "to him who dwells in the tabernacle." The LXX render it, εἰς τὸ παροπώριον—"to the place where was the recess, cell, chamber, treasury room;" or perhaps the room which the treasurer of the temple occupied. The Hebrew word תִּשְׁבְּנָה means, to dwell with or to be familiar with any one; then to be an associate or friend, and hence the participle is applied to one entrusted with the care of anything, a steward, a treasurer, &c. Jerome explains this in his Commentary as meaning, "Go to him who dwells in the tabernacle, which in Hebrew is called *Sochen*." He understands by this, some room, or recess, in the temple, where the treasurer or the prefect of the temple dwelt. Our translators have expressed, probably, the true sense, by the word *treasurer*. ¶ *Which is over the house.* That is, either who is over the temple, or over the palace. I understand it of

the latter. Shebna was not high priest, and the expression, "over the house," more properly denotes one who had the rule of the palace, or who was the principal minister of the king. See 1 Kings xviii. 3: "And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house." Here the expression undoubtedly denotes the prime minister, or one who had the charge of the royal residence, a station of great importance. What was the offence or crime of Shebna, it is impossible to say. The Jewish commentators say that he was intending to betray the palace and city to Sennacherib, but although this is possible, yet it has no direct proof.

16. *What hast thou here?* This verse contains a severe reproof of the pride, self-confidence, and ostentation of Shebna, and of his expectation that he should be buried where he had built his own tomb. It also contains an *implied* declaration that he would not be permitted to lie there when he should die, but would be removed to a distant land, to be buried in some less honorable manner. It is probable that Isaiah met him when he was at the sepulchre which he had made, and addressed this language to him there. "What hast thou here? What prospect of remaining here? What right to expect that thou wilt be buried here, or why do you erect this splendid sepulchre, as if you were a holy man, and God would allow you to lie here?" Probably his sepulchre had been erected among the sepulchres of holy men, and perhaps in some part of the royal burying place in Jerusalem. ¶ *And whom hast thou here.* Who lies here with whom you are con-

17. Behold, the LORD <sup>1</sup> will carry thee away with a <sup>2</sup> mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee.

<sup>1</sup> or, who covered thee with an excellent covering, and clothed thee gorgeously, shall surely, ver. 18.

<sup>2</sup> the captivity of a

18. He will surely violently turn and toss thee *like* a ball into a <sup>3</sup> large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house.

<sup>3</sup> large of spaces.

17 Behold יְהוָה will cast thee out with a mighty thrust, And he will surely cover thee [with shame].

18. He will whirl thee round and round, With a whirl like a ball [will he cast thee] to a wide country: There thou shalt die; and there shall be thy splendid chariots, O thou disgrace of the house of thy Lord.

nected; or who among the dead that are entombed here are connected with you, that you should deem yourself entitled to lie with them? If this was the royal cemetery, these words might be designed to intimate that he had no connexion with the royal family; and thus his building a tomb there was an evidence of his vainglory, and of an attempt to occupy a place, even in death, to which he had no title. ¶ *That thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here.* Sepulchres were hewn or cut out of rocks. See Note, ch. xiv. 9. It was usual also for princes and rich men to have their sepulchres or tombs constructed while they were themselves alive. See Matt. xxvii. 60. Shebna was doubtless a man of humble birth, none of whose ancestors or family had been honored with a burial in the royal cemetery, and hence the prophet reproves his pride in expecting to repose with the royal dead. ¶ *He that heweth him out a sepulchre on high.* On some elevated place, that it might be more conspicuous. Thus Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 33) was buried "in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David." In Heb., *the highest*, מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם. LXX, ἐν ἀναβάσει. Such sepulchres are still found in Persia. They consist of several tombs, each hewn in a high rock near the top, the front of the rock being adorned with figures in *relievo*. Some of these tombs are thirty feet from the ground.

17. Behold, the LORD will carry thee away. Of the historical fact here referred to we have no other information. To what place he was to be carried, we know not. It is probable, however, that it was to Assyria. ¶ *With a mighty captivity.* Heb., "of a man," גָּבִיר. Or perhaps, "O man." If it means "the captivity of a man," it means a strong, irresistible, mighty captivity, where the word *man* is emphatic, and means such as a mighty man would make. Comp. Job xxxviii. 3. "Gird up now thy loins like a man." The margin reads this, he "who covered thee with an excellent covering, and clothed thee gorgeously, shall surely turn and toss thee," &c. But the text conveys more nearly the idea of the Hebrew word, which denotes the action of *casting away*, or *throwing* from one, as a man throws a stone. See the same use of the word מָלַךְ in 1 Sam. xviii. 11; xx. 33; Jon. i. 5, 12, 15; Jer. xvi. 13; xxii. 26, 28. ¶ *And will surely cover thee.* Thy face, says Lowth; for this was the condition of mourners. The Chaldee is, "shall cover thee with confusion." So Vitranga, who supposes that it means that although Shebna was endeavoring to rear a monument that should perpetuate his name and that of his family, God would cover them with ignominy, and reduce them to their primitive, obscure, and humble condition.

18. He will surely violently turn, &c.

19. And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

20. And it shall come to pass in

that day, that I will call my servant <sup>m</sup> Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:

m 2 Kings 18. 18.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

19. And I will drive thee from thy station;  
And from thy state pull thee down.

20. And it shall come to pass in that day,  
That I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah,

Lowth has well expressed the sense of this:

He will whirl me round and round, and cast thee away.

Thus it refers to the action of throwing a stone with a *sling*, when the sling is whirled round and round several times before the string is let go, in order to increase the velocity of the stone that is thrown. The idea is here, that God designed to cast him into a distant land, and that he would give such an *impulse* to him that he would be sent afar, so far that he would not be able to return again. ¶ *Like a ball*. A stone, ball, or other projectile that is cast from a sling. ¶ *Into a large country*. Probably Assyria. When this was done we have no means of determining. ¶ *And there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house*. Lowth renders this,

And there shall thy glorious chariots  
Become the shame of the house of thy lord.

Noyes renders it,

There shall thy splendid chariots perish,  
Thou disgrace of the house of thy lord.

The Chaldee renders it, "and there the chariots of thy glory shall be converted into ignominy, because thou didst not preserve the glory of the house of thy lord." Probably the correct interpretation is that which regards the latter part of the verse, "the shame of thy lord's house," as an address to him as the shame or disgrace of Ahaz who had appointed him to that office, and of Hezekiah, who had continued him in it. The phrase "the chariots of thy glory," means splendid or magnificent chariots, or coaches; and refers, doubtless, to the

fact that in Jerusalem he had affected great pride and display, and had, like many weak minds, sought distinction by the splendor of his equipage. By this, as well as by his attempt to erect a magnificent tomb, probably he was well known. The idea here is, that the "chariot of his glory," i. e., the vehicle in which he should ride, should be in a distant land, not meaning that in that land he should ride in chariots as magnificent as those which he had in Jerusalem, but that he should be conveyed there; and probably borne in an ignominious manner, instead of the splendid mode in which he was carried in Jerusalem. The Jews say that when he left Jerusalem to deliver it into the hands of the enemy, they asked him where his army was; and when he said that they had turned back, they said, "thou has mocked us;" and that thereupon they bored his heels, and tied him to the tails of horses, and that thus he died. ¶ *Shall be the shame, &c.* O though disgrace and shame of the king of Jerusalem, who has sustained such a man in office.

19. *And from thy state*. From thy office; thy place of trust and responsibility. ¶ *Shall he pull thee down*. That is, God shall do it. The prophet here uses the third person instead of the first. Such a change of person is very common in the writings of the prophets.

20. *In that day*. When thou art deposed from office. ¶ *My servant*. A man who will be faithful to me; who will be trustworthy, and to whom the interests of the city may be safely confided; a man who will not seek to betray it into the hands of the enemy. Of

21. And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

22. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; <sup>n</sup> so he shall open, <sup>o</sup> and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

<sup>n</sup> ch. 9. 6.

<sup>o</sup> Job 12. 14. Rev. 3. 7.

NEW TRANSLATION.

21. And I will clothe him with thy robe,  
And strengthen him with thy girdle,  
And I will commit thy government into his hand,  
And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,  
And to the house of Judah.
22. And I will lay the key of the house of David upon his shoulder;  
And he shall open, and none shall shut;  
And shall shut, and none shall open.

Eliakim we know nothing more than what is stated here, and in ch. xxxvi. From that account it appears that he was prefect of the palace; that he was employed in a negotiation with the leader of the army of the Assyrians; and that he was in all things faithful to the trust reposed in him. ¶ *The son of Hilkiiah.* Kimchi supposes that this was the same as Azariah, the son of Hilkiiah, who might have had two names; and who was a ruler over the house of God in the time of Hezekiah. 1 Chron. vi. 13.

21. *And I will clothe him with thy robe.* He shall succeed thee in the office, and wear the garments which are appropriate to it. ¶ *And strengthen him with thy girdle.* That is, he shall wear the same girdle that thou didst. The sash, or girdle, was worn by all. Note, ch. iii. 24. In that girdle was usually the purse; and to it was attached the sword. The girdle was sometimes highly ornamented and beautiful. Often, among the Orientals, the girdle was adorned with gold, and precious stones, and was regarded as the principal embellishment of the dress. ¶ *And he shall be a father,* &c. A councillor, a guide, one who can be trusted in time of danger and difficulty. We use the word *father* in the same sense, when we speak of the father of his country.

22. *And the key.* A key is that by which a house is locked, or opened. To possess that is, therefore, to have free access to it, or control over it. Thus we give possession of a house by giving the *key* into the hands of a purchaser, implying that it is his; that he has free access to it; that he can close it when he pleases, and that no other one, without his permission, has the right of access to it. ¶ *Of the house of David.* Of the house which David built for his royal residence; that is, of the palace. This house was on Mount Zion; and to have the key of that house was to have the chief authority at court, or to be prime minister. Note, ver. 15. To be put in possession of that key, therefore, was the mark of office, or was a sign that he was intrusted with the chief authority in the palace or in the government. ¶ *Will I lay upon his shoulder.* See ch. ix. 6. This seems to have been designed as an emblem of office. But in what way it was done is unknown. Lowth supposes that the key was of considerable magnitude, and was made crooked, and that thus it would lie readily on the shoulder. He has observed also, that this was a well-known badge or emblem of office. Thus the priestess of Ceres is described as having a key on the shoulder (Callim. Ceres, ver. 45); and thus in Æschyl. Suppl.

23. And I will fasten him as a nail <sup>p</sup> in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

<sup>p</sup> Ezra 9. 8.

NEW TRANSLATION.

23 And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place;  
And he shall become a glorious seat for his father's house.

299, a female high in office is described as having a key. But it is not known in what way the key was borne. It may have been borne on the shoulder, being so made as to be easily carried there; or it may have been attached to the shoulder by a belt or strap, as a sword is; or it may have been a mere emblem or figure inwrought into the robe, and worn as a sign of office; or the figure of a key may have been worn on the shoulder as an *epaulette* is now, as a sign of office and authority. If the locks were made of wood, as we have reason to suppose, then the key was probably large, and would answer well for a sign of office. "How much was I delighted when I first saw the people, especially the Moors, going along the streets with each his key on his shoulder. The handle is generally made of brass (though sometimes of silver), and is often nicely worked in a device of filigree. The way it is carried, is to have the corner of a kerchief tied to the ring; the key is then placed on the shoulder, and the kerchief hangs down in front. At other times, they have a bunch of large keys, and then they have half on one side of the shoulder, and half on the other. For a man thus to march along with a large key on his shoulder, shows at once that he is a person of consequence. 'Raman is in great favor with the Modeliar, for he now carries the key.' 'Whose key have you got on your shoulder?' 'I shall carry my key on my own shoulder.'" *Roberts*. ¶ *So he shall open*, &c. The expression means, that he should have the highest authority in the government; and is a promise of unlimited power. Our Saviour has made use of the same expression to express the unlimited power conferred on his apostles in his Church,

(Matt. xvi. 19,) and has applied the same expression to himself in Rev iii. 7.

23. *And I will fasten him.* I will drive, fix, or make him permanent. ¶ *As a nail*, &c. The word *nail* here (נִיָּל) means, properly, a peg, pin, or spike; and is applied often to the pins or large spikes which were used to drive into the ground to fasten the cords of tents. It is also applied to the nails or spikes which are driven into walls, and on which are suspended the garments or the utensils of a family. In ancient times, every house was furnished with a large number of these pegs, or nails. They were not *driven* into the walls after the house was made, but they were *worked in* while the walls were going up. The houses were usually made of stone; and strong iron hooks or spikes were worked into the mortar while soft, and they answered the double purpose of nails to hang things on and of cramp-irons, as they were so bent as to hold the walls together. These spikes are described by Sir John Chardin (*Harmer's Observations*, i. p. 191) as "large nails with square heads like dice, well made, the ends being so bent as to make them cramp-irons. They commonly," says he, "place them at the windows and doors, in order to hang upon them, when they like, veils and curtains." It was also the custom to suspend in houses, and especially temples, suits of armor, shields, helmets, swords, &c., that had been taken in war as spoils of victory, or which had been used by illustrious ancestors, and these spikes were used for that purpose also. The word is here applied to a leader, or officer; and it means that he should be fixed and permanent in his plans and

24. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels <sup>1</sup> of flagons.

<sup>1</sup> or, instruments of violence:

NEW TRANSLATION.

24. And they shall hang upon him all the honor of the house of his father;  
The offspring and the issue, every small vessel,  
From every kind of goblet, to every kind of bottle.

office; and that as a pin in the wall sustained the ornaments of the house safely, so all the glory of the house of David, all that was dear and valuable to the nation, might be reposed on him, ver. 24. ¶ *And he shall be for a glorious throne, &c.* A glorious seat; that is, all his family and kindred should be sustained, and honored by him; or their honor and reputation might rest securely on him; and his deeds would diffuse a lustre and a glory over all his father's family. Every virtuous, patriotic, benevolent, and pious son diffuses a lustre on all his family and kindred; and this is one of the incitements to virtuous and elevated deeds which God has presented in the government of the world.

24. *And they shall hang upon him.* This figure is a continuation of that commenced in the previous verse; and is derived from the custom of hanging clothes or ornaments, &c., on the spikes or nails that were fixed in the walls; and perhaps more particularly from the custom of hanging shields, swords, suits of armor, &c., taken in battle, around the walls of a temple. A great portion of the wealth of the ancients consisted in the great quantity of gold and silver vessels which they had for various uses, and in changes of raiment. These would be hung around a house in no inconsiderable degree for ostentation and parade. "Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold; and all the vessels of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold, none were of silver," &c. 1 Kings x. 21. "The vessels in the house of the forest of Lebanon were two hundred targets and three hundred shields of beaten gold." 1 Kings x. 16, 17. That

these were hung on spikes or pins around the house is apparent from Cant. iv. 4: "Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armory, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men." Eliakim is considered as a principal support like this, whereon would be suspended all the glory of his father's family, and all the honor of his house; that is, he would be the principal support of the whole civil and ecclesiastical polity. *Louth.* ¶ *The offspring and the issue.* All that proceeded from the family; all that were connected with it. Kimchi and Aben Ezra render it, "sons and daughters." The LXX, "from the least to the greatest." The Chaldee, "sons and grandsons, youth and children." The idea is, that all the glory of the family, of all the posterity near and remote, should depend on him; and that his character would sustain and give dignity to them all. The word which is rendered *issue* (רִשְׁתָּן) according to Vitranga and Rosenmüller, denotes those that were of humble condition; and the passage means that honor should be conferred even on these by the virtues of Eliakim. ¶ *From the vessels of cups.* Literally, goblets, or bowls—כִּימָן. The word here denotes, probably, the smaller vessels; perhaps those which were made of gold and silver, though that is not certain. The idea, probably, is simply that of vessels of small capacity, whatever was the material of which they were composed; and hence the reference here is to those of the family of Eliakim who were of humble rank, or who were poor. ¶ *To all the vessels of flagons.* Marg.,

25. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

25. In that day saith JEHOVAH of hosts,  
The nail that was once fastened in a sure place shall be removed,  
And it shall be cut down and shall fall;  
And the burden that was upon it shall be cut off,  
For JEHOVAH hath spoken it.

"instruments of viols." Heb., כְּלִים. This word is often applied to instruments of music, the *nebel*, viol, (see it described in Notes, ch. v. 12; xiv. 11;) but it properly denotes a bottle made of skin for holding wine; and which, being made of the whole skin of a goat or sheep, indicated the vessels or bottles of large dimensions. Here it refers to the members of the family of Eliakim who were more wealthy and influential than those denoted by the small vessels. The glory of the whole family should depend on him. His virtues, wisdom, integrity, and honor, in defending and saving the Hebrew commonwealth, would diffuse a lustre over the whole family connexion, and render the name illustrious.

25. *In that day.* That future time which is the subject of this prophecy. This verse contains a summing up of all that the prophet had said respecting Shebna. ¶ *Shall the nail.* Not Eliakim, but Shebna. Eliakim was to be fastened, *i. e.*, confirmed in office. But Shebna was to be removed. ¶ *That is fastened in the sure place.* A phrase appropriate to an office which the incumbent supposed to be firm or secure. It here refers to Shebna. He was regarded as having a permanent hold on the office, and was making provisions for ending his days in that office. ¶ *Be removed.* To a distant land (vs. 17, 18), or simply taken down. ¶ *And be cut down, and fall.* As a spike, pin, or peg would be taken away from the wall of a house. ¶ *And the burden that was upon it.* All that it sustained—as the spikes in the

wall of a house sustained the cups of gold, or the raiment, or the armor that belonged to the family. Here it means, all that was dependent on the office of Shebna, the honor of his family, his emoluments, his hope of future fame, or of an honored burial. All these would fail as a matter of course when he was removed from his office. This is one instance of the usual mode of the divine administration. The errors of a man intrusted with office or power entails poverty, disgrace, and misery on all who are connected with him. Not only is his own name disgraced, but his sin *diffuses itself*, as it were, on all connected with him. It involves them in want, and shame, and tears; and the design is to deter those in office from sin by the fact that their crimes and errors *will* thus involve the innocent in tears and calamities, and shed disgrace and woe on those whom they love.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## ANALYSIS.

The prophecy in this chapter respects Tyre; and extends only to the end of this chapter. It is made up of a succession of *apostrophes* directed either to Tyre itself, or to the nations with which it was accustomed to trade. The first part of the prophecy (vs. 1—13) is occupied with the account of the *judicial sentence* which God had passed in regard to Tyre. This is not done in a direct and formal manner, but by addresses to the various people with whom the Tyrians had commercial intercourse, and



who would be affected chiefly by its destruction. Thus (ver. 1) the prophet calls on the ships of Tarshish to "howl" because their advantageous commerce with Tyre must cease, and the calamity attending the destruction of Tyre would reach and affect them. This intelligence respecting the calamities that had come upon Tyre, he says, would be brought to them "from the land of Chittim," (ver. 1.) that is, from the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean. In ver. 2 the calamity is described as coming directly on the island on which Tyre was built. In the subsequent verses, the prophet describes the sources of the wealth of Tyre (ver. 3), and the assurance that her great luxury and splendor should be destroyed, vs. 5—12. In ver. 13, the prophet says that this is done by the "Chaldeans;" and this verse serves to fix the time of the fulfilment to the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar. In this all commentators probably (except Grotius, who supposes that it refers to Alexander the Great) are agreed; indeed, it seems to be past all doubt, that the events here referred to pertain to the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar. In the remainder of the prophecy (ver. 14 to the end of the chapter), the prophet declares the *time* during which this calamity should continue. He declares that it shall be only for seventy years (ver. 14), and that after that, Tyre should be restored to her former splendor, magnificence, and successful commerce (vs. 16, 17); and that then her wealth would be consecrated to the service of JEHOVAH, ver. 18.

The *design* of the prophecy is, therefore, to foretell the calamities that would come upon a rich, proud, and luxurious city; and thus to show that God was the Governor and Ruler over the nations of the earth. Tyre was regarded as one of the enemies of the Jews; and the purpose of this prophecy, perhaps, was to show to the Jews that they would be protected, and that all their enemies would be destroyed. Tyre became also distinguished for pride, luxury, and consequent dissipation; and the destruction that was to come upon it was to be a demonstration that wicked nations and

cities would incur the displeasure of God, and would be destroyed.

Tyre, the subject of the prophecies, particularly of Isaiah and Ezekiel, who both predicted its overthrow (Isa. xxiii., Ezek. xxvi. xxvii. xxviii. xxix.), was a celebrated city of Phœnicia, and is usually mentioned in connexion with Sidon. Matt. xi. 21, 22; Luke x. 13, 14; Matt. xv. 21; Mark iii. 8, vii. 24, 31. It was on the coast of the Mediterranean, about 33° 20' north latitude, and was about twenty miles south of Sidon. It was an ancient city, and was one of the cities allotted to the tribe of Asher (Josh. xix. 29), but it is probable that the ancient inhabitants were never driven out by the Israelites. It seems to have been occupied by the Canaanites, and is always mentioned as inhabited by a distinct people from the Jews. 2 Sam. xxiv. 7; 1 Kings vii. 13, 14, ix. 12; Ezra iii. 7; Neh. xiii. 16; Ps. lxxxiii. 7, lxxxvii. 4. It was probably built by a colony from Sidon, since Isaiah (xxiii. 12) calls it the "daughter of Zidon;" and it is said (ver. 2) to have been replenished by Sidon. That Sidon was the most ancient city there can be no doubt. *Sidon* was the eldest son of Canaan (Gen. x. 15), and the city of Sidon is mentioned by the patriarch Jacob (Gen. xlix. 13), and in the time of Joshua it is called "Great Sidon." Josh. xi. 8. Strabo affirms that *after Sidon*, Tyre was the most celebrated city of the Phœnicians. Justin, L. 18, c. 1, § 5, expressly declares that the Sidonians, being besieged by the king of Ascalon, went in ships and built Tyre. But though Tyre was the "daughter" of Sidon, and though it was built after that, yet it soon rivalled it in importance, and in commercial enterprise.

Among the ancient writers, Tyre is mentioned as Palæ-Tyrus, (Παλαιτύρος) or ancient Tyre; and Insular Tyre. The former was built on the *coast*, and was doubtless built first, though there is evidence that the latter was early used as a place for anchorage, or a harbor. In Old Tyre, or Tyre on the coast, undoubtedly also the most magnificent edifices would be built, and the principal business would there be at first

transacted. Probably Insular Tyre was built either because it furnished a better harbor, or because being inaccessible to an invading army, it was more secure. Insular Tyre, as the name imports, was built on an island, or a *rock*, a short distance from the coast, and not far from Old Tyre. The distance from the coast to the island was about three-quarters of a mile. Probably the passage from one to the other was formerly by a ferry, or in boats only, until Alexander the Great in his siege of the city built a mole from the ruins of the old city to the new. This mole or embankment was not less than 200 feet in breadth, and constituted a permanent connexion between Tyre and the main land. Insular Tyre was remarkably safe from the danger of invasion. It commanded the sea, and of course had nothing to dread from that quarter; and the only mode in which it could become accessible to Alexander, was to build this gigantic causeway or bridge from the main land.

Tyre was distinguished for its enterprise, its commercial importance, its luxury, and its magnificence. Few, perhaps none, of the cities of antiquity were more favourably situated for commerce. It was the natural sea-port of Palestine and Syria, and it was favorably situated for commerce with all the cities and states bordering on the Mediterranean, and indeed with all the known world. The rich productions of the East passed through Tyre (see Ezek. xxvii., where there is an extended description of the various nations that trafficked with and enriched it), and the productions of distant climes by sea were introduced to the East through this sea-port. It rose, therefore, to great opulence; and to consequent luxury and sin.

It was also a place of great strength. Old Tyre was defended by a wall which was regarded as impregnable, and which is said to have resisted the attacks of Nebuchadnezzar for thirteen years. New Tyre, or Insular Tyre, was inaccessible, until Alexander constructed the immense mole by which he connected it with the main land, and as

they had the command of the sea, the city was regarded as unapproachable. Alexander could not have taken it had he not possessed resources, and patience, and power which perhaps no other ancient conqueror possessed; and had he not engaged in an enterprise which perhaps all others would have regarded as impracticable and hopeless. Josephus, indeed, states that Salmaneser, king of Assyria, made war against the Tyrians with a fleet of sixty ships, manned by 800 rowers. The Tyrians had but twelve ships, yet they obtained the victory, and dispersed the Assyrian fleet, taking 500 prisoners. Salmaneser then besieged the city for five years, but was unable to take it. This was in the time of Hezekiah, A.M. 3287, or about 717 before Christ.

Nebuchadnezzar took the city after a siege of thirteen years, during the time of the Jewish captivity, about 573 years before Christ. This was in accordance with the prophecy in this chapter (see Note, ver. 13), and according to the predictions also of Ezekiel. The desolation was entire. The city was destroyed, and the inhabitants driven into foreign lands. See Notes on vs. 7, 12. The city lay desolate for seventy years (see Note on vs. 15, 17), and Old Tyre was in ruins in the time of the invasion of Alexander the Great. A new city had risen, however, on the island, called New Tyre, and this city was taken by Alexander, after a siege of eight months, and after he had made a causeway from Old Tyre to the new city out of the ruins of the former. Near the shore the water is said to have been shallow, but near the new city it was three fathoms, or nineteen feet in depth. The city of Tyre was taken by Alexander 332 years before Christ, and 241 years after its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, and consequently about one hundred and seventy years after it had been rebuilt. It was not, however, entirely destroyed by Alexander. It became an object of contention to the successors of Alexander. It was successively invested by Antigonus and Ptolemy, and fell into the hands of the latter. In the apostolic age, it seems to have regained some-

## CHAPTER XXIII.

1. The burden of Tyre. <sup>a</sup> Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid

<sup>a</sup> Jer. 25. 22; 47. 4. Ezek. 26. 28. Amos 1. 9, 10. Zech. 9. 2—4.

waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim <sup>b</sup> it is revealed to them.

<sup>b</sup> ver. 12. Jer. 2. 10.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

## VISION XXI.—Ch. xxiii. Tyre.

## 1 THE BURDEN OF TYRE.

Howl, O ye ships of Tarshish!

For it is laid waste;

For there is no house, no port of entry:

From the land of Chittim the tidings is brought unto them.

what of its ancient splendor. There were some Christians here. Acts xxi. 3, 4. At present it belongs to Syria. It was often an object of contention during the crusades, and was distinguished as the first Archbishopric under the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. It gradually sunk into decay, lost its importance, and became a place of utter ruin. Volney noticed there, in 1784, the choir of the ancient church, the remains of the walls of the city which can still be traced, and some columns of red granite, a species unknown in Syria. In the time when it was visited by Volney and Maundrell, it was a miserable village, where the inhabitants subsisted chiefly by fishing, and the rock of Tyre was a place on which they spread their nets. Its exports consist only of a few sacks of corn and cotton, and the only merchant of which it could boast in the time when Volney was there, was a solitary Greek, who could hardly gain a livelihood. See Rob. Calmet; Edin. Ency.; Newton on the Prophecies, xi.; Keith on the Prophecies; and the Travels of Volney and Maundrell.

1. *The burden of Tyre.* Note, ch. xiii. 1. ¶ *Howl.* Lift up the voice of lamentation. This is a highly poetic description of the destruction that was coming on Tyre. The ships of Tarshish traded there; and the prophet now addresses the ships, and calls upon them to lament because the commerce by which they had been enriched, was to be destroyed, and they were to be

thrown out of employ. ¶ *Ye ships of Tarshish.* See Note, ch. ii. 16. The *Tarshish* here referred to, was doubtless a celebrated city or country in Spain, (*Ταρτησσός Tartessus*.) and was the most celebrated emporium to which the Phœnicians traded. It is mentioned by Diod. Sic. v. 35—38; Strab. iii. 148; Pliny, His. Nat. iii. 3. According to Jer. x. 9, it exported silver; according to Ezek. xxvii. 12, 25, it exported silver, iron, tin, and lead, to the Tyrian market. In this chapter, vers. 1, 6, 10, it is represented as an important Phœnician or Tyrian colony. All the circumstances agree with the supposition that *Tartessus* in Spain is the place here referred to. The name *Tartessus* (*Ταρτησσός*) is derived from the Hebrew *תרתס*, by a change simply in the pronunciation. See Bochart (Geog. Sacra, lib. iii. c. 7) and J. D. Michaelis, (Spicileg. Geog. Heb. p. i. pp. 82—103.) ¶ *For it is laid waste.* Tyre is laid waste; that is, in vision it was made to pass before the mind of the prophet as laid waste, or as it would be. Notes, ch. i. 1. The sense is, that it would be so laid waste as that the commerce with it would cease, and all the advantages which Tarshish derived from that commerce would be destroyed. ¶ *So that there is no house.* It would be completely destroyed. This was the case with old Tyre after the conquest by Nebuchadnezzar, and it remained so. See the Introduction to the chapter.

2. Be <sup>1</sup> still, ye inhabitants of | of Zidon, that pass over the sea,  
the isle; thou whom the merchants | have replenished.

<sup>1</sup> *silent.*

NEW TRANSLATION.

2. Be silent, O ye inhabitants of the island,  
The merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, did fill thee;

¶ *No entering in.* No harbor; no port; no city where the ships could remain, and with which they could continue to trade. Or perhaps it means that there should be no house into which they could enter in; that is, the city would be entirely destroyed. ¶ *From the land of Chittim.* This means, probably, from the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean. In regard to the meaning of the word *Chittim*, the following is the note of Gesenius on this verse: "Among the three different opinions of ancient and modern interpreters, according to which they sought for the land of Chittim in Italy, Macedonia, and Cyprus, I decidedly prefer the latter, which is also the opinion of Josephus, (Ant. i. 6, § 1.) According to this, Chittim is the island Cyprus, so called from the Phœnician colouy *Κίτιον*, Citium, in the southern part of the island, but still in such a sense, that this name Chittim was, at a later period, employed also in a wider sense, to designate other islands and countries adjacent to the coasts of the Mediterranean, as *e. g.*, Macedonia, Dan. xi. 30; 1 Mac. i. 1; viii. 5. This is also mentioned by Josephus. That *Κίτιον* (Citium) was sometimes used for the whole island of Cyprus, and also in a wider sense for other islands, is expressly asserted by Epiphanius, who himself lived in Cyprus, as a well-known fact (Adv. Hæres. xxx. 25); where he says, 'it is manifest to all that the island of Cyprus is called *Κίτιον* (Citium), for the Cyprians and *Rhodians* (*Ρόδιοι*) are called *Κίτιανς* (*Κίτιοι*.) It could also be used of the Macedonians because they were descended from the Cyprians and Rhodians.' That most of the cities of Cyprus were Phœnician colonies is expressly affirmed by Diodorus, (ii. 114, comp. Herod. vii. 90,) and the proximity of the island to

Phœnicia, together with its abundant supply of productions, especially such as were essential in ship-building, would lead us to expect nothing else. One of the few passages of the Bible which give a more definite hint in regard to Chittim is Ezek. xxvii. 6, which agrees very well with Cyprus. 'Of the oaks of Bashan do they make them oars; thy ships' benches do they make of ivory, encased with cedar from the isles of Chittim.' The sense of this passage is, that the fleets coming from Tarsish (Tartessus) to Tyre, would, on their way, learn from the inhabitants of Cyprus the news of the downfall of Tyre." ¶ *It is revealed to them.* The intelligence of the destruction of Tyre is made known to the ships coming from Tartessus, and sailing into Tyre. Understanding *Chittim* as taken in a large sense as denoting the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean, it means that the navigators in the ships of Tarsish would learn the intelligence of the destruction of Tyre from those coasts or islands where they might stop on their way. Tyre was of so much commercial importance, that the news of its fall would spread into all the islands of the Mediterranean.

2. *Be still.* This is the description of a city which is destroyed, where silence reigns, and where the din of commerce and the sound of revelry are no longer heard. It is an address of the prophet to Tyre, indicating that it would be soon still, and destroyed. Or it may denote deep and overwhelming grief or calamity, such as to produce stillness and silence. ¶ *Ye inhabitants of the isle.* Of Tyre. The word *isle*, *is*, is sometimes used to denote a *coast*, or maritime region, (see Note, ch. xx. 6,) but there seems no reason to doubt that by *isle* here is meant the island on

3. And by great waters the seed | for the sea hath spoken, *even* the  
of Sihor, the harvest of the river, | strength of the sea, saying, I tra-  
*is* her revenue; and she is a mart | vail not, nor bring forth children,  
of nations. | neither do I nourish up young  
4. Be thou ashamed, O Zidon; | men, *nor* bring up virgins.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

3. The seed of Sihor by her wide waters;  
The harvest of the river was her revenue;—  
She was the mart of the nations.  
4. Be thou ashamed, O Zidon, for the sea hath spoken,  
Even the strong fortress of the sea, saying,  
“I do not travail nor bring forth children,  
“Nor nourish youth, nor bring up virgins.”

which New Tyre was erected. This may have been occupied even before Old Tyre was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, as it is probable that though the main city was on the coast, yet the island may have also been inhabited. ¶ *Thou whom the merchants of Zidon.* Tyre was a colony from Sidon; and the merchants of Sidon would trade to Tyre as well as to Sidon. ¶ *That pass over the sea.* Who are engaged in commerce. The inhabitants of Sidon were chiefly sustained by commerce. ¶ *Have replenished.* Heb., “have filled,” i. e., with merchandize, and with wealth. Thus in Ezek. xxvii. 8, Tyre is represented as having derived its seamen from Sidon. “The inhabitants of Sidon and of Arvad were thy mariners.” And in Ezek. xxvii. 9—23, Tyre is represented as having been filled with ship-builders, merchants, mariners, soldiers, &c., from Gebal, Persia, Lud, Piut, Tarshish, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, Dedan, Syria, Damascus, Arabia, &c.

3. *And by great waters.* That is, by the abundant waters, or the overflowing of the Nile. Tyre was the mart to which the superabundant productions of Egypt were borne. See Ezek. xxvii. ¶ *The seed of Sihor.* There can be no doubt that by *Sihor* here is meant the river Nile in Egypt. See Jer. ii. 18; 1 Chron. xiii. 5; Josh. xiii. 3. The word שִׁיחַ, *Shihhār*, is derived from שָׁחַ, *Shāhhār*, to be black (Job xxx. 30), and is given to the Nile from its color when

it brings down the slime or mud by which Egypt is rendered so fertile. Hence it means the black, muddy, or turbid river. The Greeks gave to the river the name Μέλας, *black*, and the Latins called it *Melo*. Serv. ad Virg. Geor. iv. 291. It was called *Siris* by the Ethiopians; perhaps the same as Sihor. The upper branches of the Nile in Abyssinia all receive their names from the *color* of the water, and are called the White River, the Blue River, &c. See Map to Burckhardt's Travels in Nubia. ¶ *The harvest of the river.* The productions of the river. Egypt was celebrated for producing grain, and no small part of the supplies of grain for Rome and Greece were derived from that fertile country. It is also evident that the inhabitants of Palestine were early accustomed to go to Egypt in time of scarcity for supplies of grain. See Gen. xxxvii. 25, 28, and the history of Joseph, Gen. xli. xlii. xliii. That the *Tyrians* traded with Egypt is also well known. Herodotus (ii. 112) mentions one entire quarter of the city of Memphis that was inhabited by the Tyrians. ¶ *Is her revenue.* Her resources are brought from thence. ¶ *She is a mart of nations.* How true this was, see Ezek. xxvii. No place was more favorably situated for commerce; and she had engrossed the commerce nearly of all the world.

4. *Be thou ashamed, O Zidon.* Tyre

5. As at the report \* concern- | ing Egypt, so shall they be sorely  
     c ch. 19. 16. | pained at the report of Tyre.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

When the news shall reach Egypt,  
 They shall be in pangs at the report concerning Tyre.

was a colony of Sidon. Sidon is here addressed as the *mother* of Tyre, and is called on to lament over her daughter that was destroyed; that is, over the destruction of Tyre. In ver. 12, Tyre is called the "daughter of Sidon;" and such appellations were commonly given to cities. See Note, ch. i. 8. Sidon is here represented as deeply affected with the destruction of Tyre; as *ashamed*, or *grieved*,—as a mother is who is bereft of all her children. ¶ *The sea hath spoken.* New Tyre was on a rock at some distance from the land, and seemed to *rise out* of the sea, somewhat as Venice does. It is described here as a production of the sea. ¶ *Even the strength of the sea.* The fortress, or strong place, כְּצִר, of the sea. Tyre was on a rock, and might therefore be regarded as the strong place, or the defence of the Mediterranean. Thus Zechariah (ix. 3) says of Tyre, "And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold" — כְּצִר. ¶ *Saying, I travail not.* The expressions which follow are to be regarded as the language of Tyre—the founder of colonies and cities. The sense is, "I am destroyed. My wealth and resources are gone. My commerce is annihilated. I cease to plant cities and colonies, and to nourish and foster them by my trade." The idea of the whole verse is, that Tyre was about to be destroyed, and that the city which had been the mistress of the commercial world, and distinguished for founding other cities and colonies, was about to lose her commercial importance; and to cease to extend her colonies and her influence over other countries. Over this fact, Sidon, the mother and founder of Tyre herself, would lament; and be

humbled and grieved that her daughter, so proud, so rich, and so magnificent, would be brought so low.

5. *As at the report concerning Egypt.* According to our translation, this verse would seem to mean that the Sidonians and other nations had been pained or grieved at the report of the calamities that had come upon Egypt, and that they would be similarly affected at the report concerning Tyre. In accordance with this, some (as Jarchi) have understood it of the plagues of Egypt, and suppose that the prophet means to say, that as the nations were astonished at them, so they would be at the report of the calamities that would come upon Tyre. Others refer it to the calamities that would come upon Egypt referred to in ch. xix., and suppose that the prophet means to say that as the nations would be amazed at the report of these calamities, so they would be at the report of the overthrow of Tyre. So Vitringa. But the sense of the Hebrew may be expressed thus, "As the report or tidings of the destruction of Tyre shall reach Egypt, they shall be pained at the tidings from Tyre, or respecting Tyre." So Lowth, Noyes, Rosenmüller, Grotius, Calvin. They would be grieved either (1) because the destruction of Tyre would affect and injure the commerce of Egypt; or (2) because the Egyptians might fear that the army of Nebuchadnezzar would come upon them, and that they would share the fate of Tyre. ¶ *They.* The Egyptians. ¶ *Sorely pained.* Deeply grieved. The word here used (יָדָה) is commonly applied to the severe pain of parturition. ¶ *At the report of Tyre.* When they shall hear that Tyre is destroyed.

6. Pass ye over to Tarshish; whose antiquity is of ancient howl, ye inhabitants of the isle. days? her own feet shall carry her<sup>1</sup> afar off to sojourn.

7. Is this your joyous city, her<sup>1</sup> afar off to sojourn.  
*'from afar off.'*

NEW TRANSLATION.

6. Pass ye over to Tarshish;  
 Howl, O ye inhabitants of the isle.  
 7 Is this your joyous city,  
 Whose antiquity is from earliest days?  
 Her feet shall carry her afar to sojourn.

6. *Pass ye over.* That is, ye inhabitants of Tyre. This is an address to Tyre in view of her approaching destruction; and is designed to signify that when the city was destroyed, its inhabitants would flee to its colonies, and seek refuge and safety there. As Tarshish was one of its principal colonies, and as the ships employed by Tyre would naturally sail to Tarshish, so the inhabitants are represented as fleeing there on the attack of Nebuchadnezzar. That the inhabitants of Tyre did flee in this manner is expressly asserted by Jerome upon the authority of Assyrian histories which are now lost. "We have read," says he, "in the histories of the Assyrians, that when the Tyrians were besieged, after they saw no hope of escaping, they went on board their ships, and fled to Carthage, or to some islands of the Ionian and Ægean Sea." Jerome in loco. And again (on Ezek. xxix.) he says, "When the Tyrians saw that the works for carrying on the siege were perfected, and the foundations of the walls were shaken by the battering rams, whatever precious things in gold, silver, clothes, and various kinds of furniture the nobility had, they put them on board their ships, and carried to the islands. So that the city being taken, Nebuchadnezzar found nothing worthy of his labor." Diodorus (17, 41) relates the same thing of the Tyrians during the siege of Alexander the Great, where he says that they took their wives and children to Carthage. ¶ *Howl.* Deep grief among the Orientals was usually expressed by a loud, and long, and most melancholy and dismal howl, or shriek. Note, ch. xv. 2. ¶ *Ye inhabitants of the isle.* Of Tyre. The

word *isle*, however, may be taken, as in ch. xx. 6, (see Note in that place,) in the sense of *coast* or *maritime country* in general, and possibly may be intended to denote Old Tyre, or the coast of Phœnicia in general, though most naturally it applies to New Tyre built on the island.

7. *Is this your joyous city.* Is this the city that was just now so joyous, so full of happiness, of revelry, of business, of gaiety, of rejoicing? See Note, ch. xxii. 2. ¶ *Whose antiquity, &c.* Strabo (Lib. xvi. p. 756,) says, "After Sidon, Tyre, a splendid and most ancient city, is to be compared in greatness, beauty, and antiquity, with Sidon." Curtius (Hist. Alexan. Lib. iv. c. iv.) says, "The city was taken, distinguished both by its antiquity, and its great variety of fortune." Arrian (Lib. ii. cap. xvi.) says, that "the Temple of Hercules at Tyre was the most ancient of those which the memory of men has preserved." And Herodotus (ii. 44) says, that in a conversation which he had with the priest of that Temple, he informed him that it had then existed for 2300 years. Josephus, indeed, says (Ant. B. viii. ch. iii. § 1,) that Tyre was built but 240 years before the temple was built by Solomon—but this was probably a mistake. Justin (xviii. 3) says that Tyre was founded in the year of the destruction of Troy. Its very high antiquity cannot be doubted. ¶ *Her own feet shall carry her afar off.* Grotius supposes that by *feet* here the "feet of ships" are intended, that is, their sails and oars. But the expression is designed evidently to stand in contrast with ver. 6, and to denote that a part of the inhabitants would go by

8. Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?

9. The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain<sup>1</sup> the pride of all glory, and to bring<sup>d</sup> into contempt all the honourable of the earth.

<sup>1</sup> pollute.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. 1. 28, 29.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

- 8 Who hath purposed this against Tyre, the dispenser of crowns,  
Whose merchants are princes,  
Whose traders the nobles of the earth?  
9. JEHOVAH of hosts hath purposed it,  
To stain the pride of all glory,  
'To make contemptible all the nobles of the earth

land into captivity. Probably many of them were taken as prisoners by Nebuchadnezzar; and perhaps many of them, when the city was besieged, found opportunity to escape and flee by land to a distant place of safety.

8. *Who hath taken this counsel.* Who has determined this? To whom is this to be traced? How can it be accounted for? Is this the work of man, or is it the plan of God?—questions which would naturally arise at the contemplation of the ruin of a city so ancient and so magnificent. The object of this question is to trace it all to God; and this, perhaps, indicates the scope of the prophecy—to show that God reigns, and does all his pleasure over cities and kingdoms. ¶ *The crowning city.* The distributor of crowns; or the city from which dependent towns, provinces, and kingdoms had arisen. Many colonies and cities had been founded by Tyre. Tartessus in Spain, Citium in Cyprus, Carthage in Africa, and probably many other places were Phœnician colonies, and derived their origin from Tyre, and were still its tributaries and dependents. Comp. Ezek. xxvii. 33. ¶ *Whose merchants are princes.* Princes trade with thee, and thus acknowledge their dependence on thee. Or thy merchants are splendid, gorgeous, and magnificent like princes. The former, however, is probably the meaning. ¶ *Whose traffickers.* כְּנַעֲנִי, *Canaanites.* As the ancient inhabitants of Canaan were traffickers or merchants, the word came to denote merchants in general. See

Job xli. 6; Hos. xii. 7, Zeph. i. 11; Ezek. xvii. 4. So the word *Chaldean* came to mean *Astrologers*, because they were celebrated for astrology.

9. *The LORD of hosts hath purposed it.* Note, ch. i. 9. It is to be traced to JEHOVAH. It is not by human counsel that it has been done. Whoever is the instrument, yet the overthrow of wicked, proud, and vicious cities and nations is to be traced to the God who rules in the empires and kingdoms of the earth. See Notes, ch. x. 5—7. ¶ *To stain the pride, &c.* Marg., *Pollute.* This is the meaning of the Hebrew word פָּלַח. It means, properly, to bore, or pierce through; to open, make common (Lev. xix. 29); then to profane, defile, pollute, as *e. g.*, the sanctuary (Lev. xix. 8, xxi. 9), the Sabbath (Ex. xxxi. 14), the name of God (Lev. xviii. 21, xix. 12). Here it means that the destruction of Tyre would show that it was all of little value; and that God could easily level it all with the dust. The destruction of Tyre would show this in reference to all human glory, because (1) it was one of the most ancient cities; (2) it was one of the most magnificent; (3) it was one of the most strong, secure, and inaccessible; (4) it was the one of most commercial importance, most distinguished in the view of nations; and (5) its example would be the most striking and impressive. God often selects the most distinguished and important cities and men to make them examples to others;



10. Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: *there is no more strength.*<sup>1</sup>

11. He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the king-

doms: the LORD hath given a commandment<sup>2</sup> against<sup>3</sup> the merchant city, to destroy the<sup>4</sup> strong holds thereof.

<sup>2</sup> or, concerning a merchantman.  
<sup>3</sup> Canaan. <sup>4</sup> or, strengths.

<sup>1</sup> girdle.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

10. Pass through thy land as a river,  
O daughter of Tarshish;  
The barrier is no more.

11. His hand he stretched out over the sea,  
He shook the kingdoms.

and to show the ease with which he can bring all down to the earth. ¶ *To bring into contempt, &c.* To bring their plans and purposes into contempt; and to show how unimportant and how foolish are their schemes in the sight of a holy God.

10. *Pass through thy land as a river.* This verse has been very variously understood. Vitringa supposes that it means that the city would be destroyed; that all that held it together—its fortifications, walls, &c., would be laid waste, and that as a river flows on freely, so the inhabitants would be scattered far and near. Everything, says he, would be levelled, and the field would not be distinguishable from the city. Grotius thus renders it, "Pass to some one of thy colonies, as a river flows from the fountain to the sea, so do you go to the ocean." Lowth understands it also as relating to the time of the destruction of Tyre, and to the escape which the inhabitants would then make.

Overflow thy land like a river,  
O daughter of Tarshish; the mound [that kept  
in thy waters] is no more.

The LXX render it, "Cultivate (Ἐργάζου) thy land, for the ships shall no more come from Καρχηδόνας—Carthage." Probably the true meaning is that which refers it to the time of the siege, and to the fact that the inhabitants would seek other places when their defence was destroyed. That is, "Pass through thy territories, thy dependent cities, states, colonies, and seek a refuge there; or wander there like a flowing stream." ¶ *Like a river. Per-*

*haps the allusion is to the Nile, as the word נָחַשׁ is usually given to the Nile; or to any river that overflows its banks, or that flows on with a mighty current when all obstructions are removed. The idea is, that as a collection of waters flow on when the barriers are removed, so the inhabitants of Tyre would pour forth from their city like the waters of a mighty, long pent up, and swollen stream. The idea is not so much that of rapidity, as it is they should go like a stream that has no dykes, barriers, or obstacles now to confine its flowing waters. ¶ O daughter of Tarshish.* Tyre; so called, either because it was in some degree sustained and supplied by the commerce of Tarshish; or because its inhabitants would become the inhabitants of Tarshish, and it is so called by anticipation. The Vulgate renders this, *filia maris, daughter of the sea.* Junius supposes that the prophet addresses those who were then in the city who were natives of Tarshish, and exhorts them to flee for safety to their own city. ¶ *There is no more strength.* Marg., *girdle.* The word מִגְדָּל means, properly, a *girdle*, (Job xii. 21.) It is applied to that which binds or secures the body; and may be applied here perhaps to that which secured, or bound the city of Tyre; that is, its fortifications, its walls, its defences. They would all be levelled; and nothing would secure the inhabitants, as they would flow forth as waters that are pent up flow forth when every barrier is removed.

11. *He stretched out his hand. That*

12. And he said, Thou shalt arise, pass over to <sup>c</sup> Chittim; there no <sup>c</sup> more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: also shalt thou have no rest.

<sup>c</sup> Rev. 18. 22.

ver. 1.

NEW TRANSLATION.

**JEHOVAH** gave command concerning Canaan  
To destroy her strong holds.\*

12. And he said,  
"Thou shalt no more exult,  
"Thou dishonored virgin, daughter of Zidon;  
"Arise, pass over to Chittim,  
"Even there shalt thou have no rest."

**is, JEHOVAH.** See ver. 9. To stretch out the hand is indicative of punishment, or correction. (see Note, ch. v. 25, ix. 12,) and means that God had resolved to inflict exemplary punishment on Tyre and its dependent colonies. ¶ *Over the sea.* That is, over the sea coast of Phœnicia; or over the cities that were built on the coast. This alludes to the fact that Nebuchadnezzar would lay siege to these cities, and would ravage the maritime coast of Phœnicia. It is not improbable also, that, having taken Tyre, he would extend his conquests to *Citium*, on the island of Cyprus, and destroy as many of the dependent cities of Tyre as possible. ¶ *The Lord hath given a commandment.* The control here asserted over Nebuchadnezzar is similar to that which he asserted over the Assyrian Sennacherib. See Note, ch. x. 5. ¶ *Against the merchant city.* Heb., "Against Canaan," אֶל-כַּנָּאן. The word "*Canaan*" may here be used, as in verse 8, to denote a place given to merchandize or traffic, since this was the principal employment of the inhabitants of this region; but it is rather to be taken in its obvious and usual sense in the Scriptures, as denoting the land of Canaan, and as denoting that Nebuchadnezzar would be sent against it, and especially the maritime parts of it, to lay it waste. It refers here, doubtless, to Phœnicia—a part of Canaan. ¶ *To destroy the strong holds thereof.* That is, the strong holds of Canaan; as

Tyre, Sidon, Accho, &c. These cities were the strong holds of the land of Canaan; the places of principal importance and strength. Tyre, especially, was strongly fortified, and was able long to resist the arms of the Chaldeans.

12. *And he said.* God said, ver. 9.

*Thou shalt no more rejoice.* The sense is, that Tyre was soon to be destroyed. It does not mean that it should *never* afterwards exult or rejoice, for the prophet says (ver. 17), that *after* its destruction it would be restored, and again be filled with exultation and joy. ¶ *O thou oppressed virgin.* Lowth renders this, "O thou deflowered virgin," expressing the sense of the word

הַמְעֵשָׂה. ¶ *Daughter of Zidon.* Ver.

4. ¶ *Pass over to Chittim.* Note, ver. 1. The idea is, that under the siege, or when the city should be taken, the inhabitants of Tyre would seek refuge in her colonies, and the cities that were dependent on her. ¶ *There also shalt thou have no rest.* It is not improbable that Nebuchadnezzar would carry his arms to Cyprus—on which the city of Citium was—where the Tyrians would take refuge first. Megasthenes, who lived about 300 years before Christ, says of Nebuchadnezzar, that he subdued a great part of Africa and Spain, and that he carried his arms as far as the Pillars of Hercules. See Newton on the Prophecies, xi. § 11. But whether this refers to the oppressions which Nebuchadnezzar would bring on them or not, it is certain that the colonies that

13. Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, *till* the Assyrian founded it for them <sup>s</sup>

*g Ps. 72. 9.*

that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; and he brought it to ruin.

NEW TRANSLATION.

13. Lo! the land of the Chaldeans!

This people was not;

The Assyrian founded it for the inhabitants of the desert.

They raised the watch towers,

They set up its palaces;

This people hath reduced her to a ruin.

sprung from Phœnicia were exposed to constant wars after this. Carthage was a colony of Tyre, and it is well known that this city was engaged in constant hostility with the Romans until it was utterly destroyed. Indeed, all the dependent colonies of ancient Tyre became interested and involved in the agitations and commotions which were connected with the conquests of the Roman empire.

13. *Behold the land of the Chaldeans.*

This is a very important verse, as it expresses the source whence these calamities were coming upon Tyre; and as it expresses some historical facts of great interest respecting the rise of Babylon. In the previous verses, the prophet had foretold the certain destruction of Tyre, and had said that whoever was the agent, it was to be traced to the overruling providence of God. He here states distinctly that the agent in accomplishing all this would be the Chaldeans—a statement which fixes the time to the siege of Nebuchadnezzar, and proves that it does not refer to the conquest by Alexander the Great. A part of this verse should be read as a parenthesis, and its general sense has been well expressed by Lowth, who, in this translation, has followed Vitringa.

Behold the land of the Chaldeans;

This people was of no account;—

(The Assyrian founded it for the inhabitants of the desert;

They raised the watch-towers, they set up the palaces thereof):

This people hath reduced her to a ruin.

¶ *Behold.* Indicating that what he

was about to say was something unusual, remarkable, and not to be expected in the ordinary course of events. That which was so remarkable was the fact that a people formerly so little known, and of no account in the sight of nations, would rise to such power as to be able to overturn the ancient and mighty city of Tyre. ¶ *The land of the Chaldeans.* Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Chaldea, or Babylonia. The names, Babylon and Chaldea, are often interchanged, as denoting the same kingdom and people. See ch. xlviii. 14, 20; Jer. l. 1; li. 24; Ezek. xii. 13. The sense is, “lo! the power of Chaldea, or Babylonia, shall be employed in your overthrow.” ¶ *This people.* The people of Babylonia, or Chaldea. ¶ *Was not.* Was not known; was not celebrated; had no government or power; was a rude, nomadic, barbarous, feeble, and illiterate people. The same phrase occurs in Deut. xxxii. 21, where it means a people unknown, rude, barbarous, wandering. That this was formerly the character of the Chaldeans is apparent from Job i. 17, where they are described as a predatory people; a nomadic race, having no established place of abode, and living by plunder. ¶ *Till the Assyrian.* Babylon was probably founded by Nimrod, (see Notes on ch. xiii.) but it was long before it rose to splendour. Belus, or Bel, the Assyrian, is said to have reigned at Babylon, A.M. 2682, or 1322 B.C., in the time of Shamgar, judge of Israel. He was succeeded by Ninus, and Semiramis, who gave the principal celebrity

14. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the

15. And it shall come to pass end of seventy years<sup>1</sup> shall Tyre sing as an harlot.

<sup>1</sup> it shall be unto Tyre as the song of.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

14. Howl, O ye ships of Tarshish!

For your strong hold is destroyed.

15. And it shall come to pass in that day,  
That Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years  
According to the days of one dynasty.

At the end of seventy years

It shall be to Tyre as the song of an harlot.

and splendour to the city and kingdom, and who may be said to have been its founders. They are probably referred to here. ¶ *Founded it.* Established it; gave it celebrity and power. Semiramis reclaimed it from the waste of waters; built dykes to confine the Euphrates in the proper channel; and made it the capital of the kingdom. This is the account given by Herodotus. Hist. B. 1. "She (Semiramis) built mounds worthy of admiration, where, before, the river was accustomed to spread like a sea through the whole plain." ¶ *For them that dwell in the wilderness.* Heb., *בְּיָדָם*, for the *tziim*. This word, from *צ*, or *צַד*, (a waste or desert,) denotes, properly, the inhabitants of the desert, or waste places, and is applied (1) to men, Ps. lxxii. 9; lxxiv. 14; (2) to animals, Isa. xiii. 21; (Notes) xxxiv. 14. Here it denotes, I suppose, those who had been formerly inhabitants of the deserts around Babylon; the wandering, rude, uncultivated, and predatory people, such as the Chaldeans were (Job i. 17); and means that the Assyrian who founded Babylon, collected this rude and predatory people, and made use of them in building the walls, towers, &c., of the city. The same account Arrian gives respecting Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, who says, that "Philip found them wandering and unsettled (*πλανήταρς καὶ ἀπόρουρς*), feeding small flocks

of sheep upon the mountains, that he gave them coats of mail instead of their shepherd's dress, and led them from the mountain to the plain, and gave them cities to dwell in, and established them with good and wholesome laws." Hist. Alex., Lib. vii. ¶ *They set up the towers thereof.* That is, the towers in Babylon, not in Tyre. See Notes on ch. xiii. Herodotus expressly says that the Assyrians built the towers and temples of Babylon. B. 1. § 84. ¶ *The palaces.* Of Babylon. ¶ *And he brought it to ruin.* That is, the Babylonian, or Chaldean, brought Tyre to ruin; to wit, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of a people formerly unknown and rude, would be employed to destroy the ancient and magnificent city of Tyre.

14. *Howl, &c., ver. 1.* ¶ *For your strength.* That which has been your support and strength; the source of your property; to wit, Tyre. Comp. Ezek. xxvi. 15—18.

15. *Tyre shall be forgotten.* Shall cease to be a place of importance in commerce; shall be unheard of in those distant places to which ships formerly sailed. ¶ *Seventy years, according to the days of one king.* "That is, of one kingdom. See Dan. vii. 17, viii. 20." *Lowth.* The word *king* may denote dynasty or kingdom. The duration of the Babylonian monarchy was properly but seventy years. Nebuchadnezzar began his conquest in the first year of

16. Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, | sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

16. Take the harp; go about the city, O harlot forgotten!  
Play skilfully: sing many songs,  
That thou mayest be remembered.

his reign, and from thence to the taking of Babylon by Cyrus was seventy years. And at that time the nations that had been conquered and subdued by the Babylonians would be restored to liberty. Tyre was indeed taken towards the middle of that period; but only for the remaining part of it. The Babylonian dynasty and oppression were to continue for seventy years, and Tyre and the other vanquished nations should be in subjection till the end of that period. "All these nations," says Jeremiah (xxv 11), "shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." Some of them were conquered sooner and some later; but the end of this period was the common time of deliverance to them all. So Lowth, Newton, Vitringa, Aben Ezra, Rosenmüller, &c., understand this.—That "the days of one king" may denote here *kingdom*, or dynasty, and be applied to the duration of the kingdom of Babylon, is apparent from two considerations, viz. (1.) The word "king" must be so understood in several places in the Scriptures. Dan. vii. 17: "These great beasts, which are four, are four great *kings* which shall arise out of the earth," that is, kingdoms, or *succession* of kings. Dan. viii. 20. So Rev. xvii. 12. (2.) The expression is peculiarly applicable to the Babylonian monarchy, because during the entire seventy years which that kingdom lasted, it was under the dominion of one family or dynasty. Nebuchadnezzar founded the Babylonian empire, or raised it to so great splendor, that he was regarded as its founder, and was succeeded in the kingdom by his son Evil-Merodach, and his grandson Belshazzar, in whose

reign the kingdom terminated. Comp. Jer. xxvii. 7. "And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son," &c. The period of seventy years is several times mentioned as a period during which the nations that were subject to Babylon would be oppressed, and *after* that they should be set at liberty. See Jer. xxv. 11, 12, xxix. 10. Comp. Jer. xlvi. 26. ¶ *Shall Tyre sing as an harlot.* Margin, as the Hebrew, "It shall be unto Tyre as the song of an harlot." That is, Tyre shall be restored to its former state of prosperity and opulence; it shall be adorned with the rich productions of other climes; it shall be gay and joyful again. There are two ideas here, one that Tyre should be again prosperous; and the other, that she should sustain substantially the same character as before. It was common to compare cities with females—whether virtuous or otherwise. See Note, ch. i. 8. The same figure which is here used occurs in Rev. xvii. 3—19. Comp. Nahum iii. 4; Isa. xlvii. 1; Rev. xviii. 3, 9.

16. *Take an harp, &c.* This is a continuation of the figure commenced in the previous verse, a direct address to Tyre as an harlot, to go about the city with the usual expressions of joy and rejoicing. Thus Donatus in Terent. Eunuch. iii. 2, 4, says,

"Fidicinam esse meretricum est,"

and thus Horace,

"Nec meretrix tibicina, cujus  
Ad strepitum salias."

I Epis. xiv. 25.

¶ *Thou harlot.* Tyre. ¶ *That hast been forgotten.* For seventy years, That hast lain unknown, desolate,

17. And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and <sup>h</sup> shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.

A Rev. 17. 2.

18. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness <sup>i</sup> to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for <sup>old</sup> durable clothing.

i Zec. 14. 20, 21.

<sup>old</sup>.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

17. And at the end of seventy years, JEHOVAH shall visit Tyre,  
And she shall return to her gain,  
And shall play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world  
That are upon the face of the earth.
18. But her merchandize, and her gain, shall be holy to JEHOVAH;  
It shall not be treasured up, nor shall it be kept in store,  
For her gain shall be for those who dwell before the face of JEHOVAH,  
For abundant food, and for comely raiment.

ruined. ¶ *Make sweet melody, &c.* Still the prophet keeps up the idea of the harlot that had been forgotten, and that would now call her lovers again to her dwelling. The sense is, that Tyre would rise to her former splendor; and that the nations would be attracted by the proofs of returning prosperity, to renew their commercial intercourse with her.

17. *The LORD will visit Tyre.* God will restore her to her former wealth and magnificence. ¶ *And she shall turn to her hire.* The word *hire* here denotes the wages or reward that is given to an harlot; and the idea which was commenced in the previous verses is here continued—of Tyre as an harlot—gay, splendid, licentious, and holding intercourse with strangers and foreigners. The *gains* of that commerce with other nations are here represented as *her hire*. ¶ *And shall commit fornication, &c.* Shall again be the mart of nations (ver. 3); shall have intercourse with all the nations; shall derive her support, splendor, luxury from all. The idea is, that she would be restored to her former commercial importance, and perhaps, also, the prophet intends to intimate that she would procure those

gains by dishonest acts, and by fraudulent pretexts. After the destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, it remained desolate until the close of the Babylonian monarchy. Then a new city was built on the island, that soon rivalled the former in magnificence. That new city was besieged and taken by Alexander the Great, on his way to the conquests of the East.

18. *And her merchandise.* The prophecy here does not mean that this would take place immediately after her rebuilding, but that subsequent to the seventy years of desolation this would occur. ¶ *Shall be holiness to the LORD.* This shall be consecrated to JEHOVAH. This undoubtedly means, that at some future period after the rebuilding of Tyre, the true religion should prevail there; and her wealth should be devoted to his service. That the true religion prevailed at Tyre, subsequently to its restoration and rebuilding, there can be no doubt. After the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, they spread extensively into the surrounding countries, and were everywhere distinguished for making proselytes. The Christian religion was early established at Tyre. Paul found several disciples of

Christ there when on his way to Jerusalem. (Acts xxi. 3—6.) It suffered much, says Lowth, under the Diocletian persecution. Eusebius (Hist. Lib. x. cap. iv.) says, that "when the church of God was founded in Tyre, and in other places, much of its wealth was consecrated to God, and was brought as an offering to the church, and was presented for the support of the ministry, agreeable to the commandments of the Lord." Jerome says, "We have seen churches built to the Lord in Tyre; we have beheld the wealth of all, which was not treasured up nor hid, but which was given to those who dwelt before the Lord." Tyre continued Christian until it was taken by the Saracens in 639; it was recovered again by Christians in 1124. In 1280 it was conquered by the Mamelukes, and was taken by the Turks in 1516. It is now utterly desolate, and is under the dominion of the Sultan, as a part of Syria. ¶ *It shall not be treasured, &c.* It shall be freely expended; shall be regarded as consecrated to the Lord, and devoted to his service. ¶ *For them that dwell before the Lord.* For the ministers of religion. The language is taken from the custom of the Jews, when the priests dwelt at Jerusalem. The meaning is, that the wealth of Tyre should be consecrated to the service and support of religion. ¶ *For durable clothing.* Wealth formerly consisted much in changes of raiment; and the idea here is, that the wealth of Tyre would be devoted to God, and that it would be furnished for the support of those who ministered at the altar.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### ANALYSIS.

The previous chapters, from the 13th to the 23rd inclusive, have been occupied mainly in the description of the destruction of nations that were hostile to the Jews, or of great and distressing calamities that would come upon them. The prophet had thus successively depicted the calamities that would come upon Babylon, Damascus,

Moab, Nubia, Egypt, Dumah, and Tyre. In ch. xxii. he had, however, described the calamities which would come upon Judea and Jerusalem by the invasion of Sennacherib.

In this chapter, the prophet returns to a description of the calamities which would come upon the people of God themselves. This chapter, and the three following, to the end of the 27th, seem to have been uttered about the same time, and perhaps may be regarded as constituting one vision, or prophecy. So Noyes, Lowth, and Rosenmüller regard it. If these chapters be included in the prophecy, then it consists (1) of a description of *calamities* in ch. xxiv.; (2) of a song of praise expressive of deliverance from those calamities, and of the consequent spread of the true religion, in ch. xxv.; (3) of a song of praise suitable to celebrate the triumphs of the true religion in ch. xxvi.; and (4) of the effect of this deliverance in purifying the Jews in ch. xxvii.

When the prophecy was uttered is wholly unknown. In regard to the events to which it relates, there has been a great diversity of opinion, and scarcely are any two interpreters agreed. Grotius regards it as relating to the carrying away of the ten tribes by Shalmanezar. Hensler supposes that it refers to the invasion of Sennacherib. Vitranga supposes that it relates to the times of the Maccabees, and to the trials and calamities which came upon the Jews under the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes. Noyes regards it as descriptive of the destruction of the land by Nebuchadnezzar, and of the return of the Jews from exile. Calvin regards the account in these four chapters as a *summing up*, or *recapitulation* of what the prophet had said in the previous prophecies respecting Babylon, Moab, Egypt, &c., and then of the subsequent state of prosperity, and of the spread of the true religion which should succeed these general and far-spread devastations. Subsequently to each of these predictions respecting calamity, the prophet had foretold pros-

perity and the advance of truth; and he supposes that this is a mere condensing, or summing up, of what he had said more at length in the preceding chapters. Lowth supposes that it may have reference to *all* the great desolations of the country by Shalmanezar, by Nebuchadnezzar, and by the Romans, especially to that of the Romans, to which some parts of it, he says, seem to be peculiarly applicable. It is certain that the prophet employs *general* terms; and as he gives no *certain* indications of the time, or the circumstances under which it was delivered, it is exceedingly difficult to determine either. The *general* drift of the prophecy is, however, plain. It is a prediction of deliverance, prosperity, and of the prevalence of true religion, *after* a series of oppressive judgments should have come upon the land. It is designed, therefore, to be *consolatory* to the Jews under impending calamities, and to convey the assurance that though they would be oppressed, yet their sufferings would be succeeded by occasions of gratitude and joy. In this respect it accords with the general strain of the prophecies of Isaiah, that the people of God would be protected; that their name and nation should not be wholly obliterated; and that the darkest seasons of trial would be succeeded by deliverance and joy.

On the whole, it seems to me, that the prophecy relates to the calamities that would come upon the nation by the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, and the carrying away to Babylon, and the subsequent deliverance from that oppressive bondage, and the joy consequent on that. According to this interpretation, the 24th chapter is occupied mainly with the description of the *calamities* that would come upon the land by the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar; the 25th describes the *deliverance* from that oppressive bondage and the re-establishment of the true religion on Mount Zion, with a rapid glance at the ultimate prevalence of religion under the Messiah, suggested by the deliverance from the Babylonish bondage; the

26th chapter is a *song* expressive of joy at this signal deliverance—in language, in the main, so general that it is as applicable to the redemption under the Messiah, as to the deliverance from Babylon; and the 27th chapter is descriptive of the *effect* of this captivity and subsequent deliverance in purifying Jacob (ch. xxvii. 6—9), and recovering the nation to righteousness.

The 24th chapter is composed of three parts. The first (vs. 1—12) contains a description of the calamities that would come upon the whole land, amounting to far-spread and wide desolation—with a graphic description of the effects of it on the inhabitants (ver. 2), on the land (vs. 3—6), on the wine, the amusements, the song, &c. (vs. 7—12), causing all to cease, and all gaiety and prosperity to come to an end. Secondly, (vs. 13—17,) a statement by the prophet that a *few* would be left in the land amidst the general desolation, and that they would be filled with joy that they had escaped. From their retreats and refuges, their fastnesses and places of security, they would lift up the song of praise that they had been preserved. Third, (vs. 18—23,) a further description of augmented judgment that should come upon the land—a more severe and lengthened calamity stretching over the land, agitating it like an earthquake. Yet there is even here (vs. 22, 23) an indication that there would be deliverance, and that the Lord of hosts would reign on Mount Zion—a description which is extended through the next chapter, and which constitutes the scope and substance of that chapter. In the division of the prophecy into chapters, that chapter should have been connected with this as a part of the same prophecy, and a continuance of the same subject. Indeed, but for the *length* of the prophecy, these four chapters should have been thrown into one, or if the prophecy had been broken up into chapters, important aids would have been rendered to a correct understanding of it had there been some indication in the margin that they constituted *one* prophecy or vision.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

1. Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth <sup>1</sup> it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

2. And it shall be, as with the

<sup>1</sup> *perverteth the face thereof.*

people, so with <sup>a</sup> the <sup>2</sup> priest; as <sup>b</sup> with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

<sup>a</sup> Hos. 4. 9.  
<sup>2</sup> or, prince. Gen. 41. 45.

<sup>b</sup> Ep. 6. 8, 9.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

VISION XXII.—Ch. xxiv.—xxvii. *Judea.*

1. Lo! JEHOVAH depopulates and drains the land!  
Yea, he turns it upside down, and scatters the inhabitants.
2. And it shall be,  
As with the people, so with the priest;  
As with the servant, so with his master;  
As with the maid, so with her mistress;  
As with the buyer, so with the seller;  
As with the lender, so with the borrower;  
As with the usurer, so with the giver of usury.

1. *Maketh the earth empty.* That is, will depopulate it, or take away its inhabitants, and its wealth. The word *earth* here, *אָרֶץ*, is used evidently, not to denote the whole world, but the land to which the prophet particularly refers—the land of Judah. It should have been translated *the land*. See Joel i. 2. It is possible, however, that the word here may be intended to include so much of the nations that surrounded Palestine as were united with it in alliance, or as were connected with it in the desolations under Nebuchadnezzar. ¶ *And turneth it upside down.* Margin. “Perverteth the face thereof.” That is, everything is thrown into confusion; the civil and religious institutions are disorganized, and di-arrangement everywhere prevails. ¶ *And scattereth abroad, &c.* This was done in the invasion by the Chaldeans, and by the carrying away of the inhabitants into their long and painful captivity.

2. *As with the people, so with the priest.*

This does not mean in moral character, but in destiny. It does not mean that the character of the priest should have any influence on that of the people, or that because the one was corrupt, the other would be; but it means that all would be involved in the same calamity; there would be no favored class that would escape. It is designed to set forth the greatness of the judgment, that it would come upon all ranks alike. The prophet therefore enumerates the various ranks of the people, and shows that all classes would be involved in the impending calamity. ¶ *As with the taker of usury.* He who loans his money at interest. It was contrary to the Mosaic law for one Israelite to take interest of another (Lev. xxv. 36; Deut. xxiii. 19; Neh. v. 7, 10); but it is not probable that this law was very carefully observed, and especially in the corrupt times that preceded the Babylonian captivity. The rich and the poor would now be involved in the same calamity.

3. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word.

4. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty

<sup>1</sup> people of the earth do languish.

5. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because <sup>c</sup> they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

<sup>1</sup> height of the.  
c Gen. 3. 17. Num. 35. 33.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

3. The land shall be completely emptied and completely plundered,  
For **JEHOVAH** hath spoken this word.
4. The land mourneth; it withereth;  
The world languisheth; it withereth;  
The lofty people of the land do languish.
5. The land also is polluted under its inhabitants;  
For they have transgressed the law,  
They have changed the statute,  
They have broken the everlasting covenant.

3. *The land.* Heb., the *earth*, as in ver. 1. It is here rendered correctly "*the land*," as it should have been there—meaning the land of Canaan. ¶ *And utterly spoiled.* Plundered. Its valuable possessions shall become the spoil or the prey of the invading foe. This is an emphatic repetition of the declaration in ver. 1, to show the absolute certainty of that which was threatened.

4. *The earth mourneth.* The word "earth" here, as in ver. 1, means the land of Judea, or that and so much of the adjacent countries as should be subject to the desolation described. The figure here is taken from flowers when they lose their beauty and languish; or when the plant that lacks moisture or is cut down, loses its vigour and its vitality, and soon withers. Comp. Note, ch. i. 30, ch. xxxiv. 4; Ps. i. 3. ¶ *The world.* This is synonymous with the "earth," and denotes the kingdoms of Judea and Israel. Comp. Note, ch. xiii. 11. ¶ *The haughty people.* Margin, as in the Hebrew, "*height of the people.*" It denotes the great, the nobles, the princes of the land. The phrase is expressive of their *rank*, not of their moral character.

5. *The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof.* The statements in

this verse are given as a reason why the curse had been pronounced against them, and why these calamities had come upon them, ver. 6. The first reason is, that the very earth had become polluted by their crimes, or under the inhabitants. This phrase may denote that they had been guilty of shedding innocent blood; that injustice, and cruelty, and blood-shedding prevailed to such an extent, that the very earth was stained with gore, and covered with blood *under* the guilty population. So the phrase is used in Num. xxxv. 33; Ps. cvi. 38. Or it may mean, in general, that the wickedness of the people was great and was accumulating, and the very earth under them was polluted by sustaining such a population. But the former is probably the correct interpretation. ¶ *Changed the ordinance.* Or the *statute*, *pr.* This word, from *pr.*, to engrave, and then to make or institute a law or an ordinance, is usually applied to the *positive* statutes appointed by Moses—the institutions of his religion and civil polity. The word *statute* accurately expresses the idea. *These* they had changed. They had introduced new statutes; and in fact, if not in form, repealed the laws of Moses, and introduced others. ¶ *Broken the*

6. Therefore <sup>d</sup> hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth

are burned, <sup>e</sup> and few men left.

7. The <sup>f</sup> new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh.

<sup>d</sup> Mal. 4. 6.

<sup>e</sup> 2 Pet. 3. 10.

<sup>f</sup> ch. 16. 8, 9. Joel 1. 10, 12.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

6. Therefore hath the curse devoured the land,  
And they that dwell therein are desolate;  
Therefore are the inhabitants of the land consumed,  
And few are the men that are left.
7. The new wine mourneth;  
The vine languisheth;  
All that were happy in heart do sigh.

*everlasting covenant.* The word *covenant* here is evidently used, as it is often, in the sense of *law*. By the term "everlasting covenant," Vitringa correctly supposes is denoted the laws of nature, the immutable laws of justice and right, which are engraven on the conscience, and which are inflexible and perpetual.

6. *Therefore.* In consequence of the prevailing iniquity of all classes of people in the land. ¶ *Hath the curse.* The curse of God, exhibited in the general desolation. ¶ *Devoured.* Eaten it up; a figurative expression that is common in the Scriptures, denoting that the desolation is wide-spread and ruinous.

¶ *Are burned.* נִשְׂרָפָה. Instead of this reading, Lowth proposes to read נִשְׂרָפָה, *are destroyed.* The LXX read it, "therefore the inhabitants of the land shall be poor." The Syriac, "the inhabitants of the land shall be slain." But there is no authority from the MSS. to change the text as proposed by Lowth. Nor is it necessary. The prophet does not mean that the inhabitants of the land were consumed by fire. The expression is evidently figurative. He is speaking of the effect of *wrath* or the *curse*, and that effect is often described in the Scriptures as burning, or consuming as a fire does. And the sense is, that the inhabitants of the land are brought under the withering, burning, consuming effect of that wrath; and the same effects are produced by it as are

seen when a fire runs over a field or a forest. Hence the word here used, נִשְׂרָפָה, *to burn, to be kindled*, is often used in connexion with wrath, to denote burning or raging anger. Ex. xxii. 23: "His anger burns." Gen. xxx. 2: "And the anger of Jacob was kindled against Rachel." xlv. 18; Job xxxii. 2, 3, xlii. 7; Gen. xxxi. 36. "His anger was kindled." Ps. xxxvii. 1, 7, 8; Prov. xxiv. 19. Comp. Job xxx. 30:

My skin is black upon me,  
And my bones are burnt with heat.

The sense is, that the inhabitants of the land were wasted away under the wrath of God, so that few were left—as the trees of the forest are destroyed before a raging fire. ¶ *And few men left.* This was literally true after the invasion of the land by the Chaldeans. 2 Kings xxiv. 14—16.

7. *The new wine mourneth.* The new wine, נֵיִר, denotes, properly, *must*, or the wine that was newly expressed from the grape, and that was not fermented, usually translated new wine, or sweet wine. The expression here is figurative and poetic. The wine languishes or mourns, because there are none to drink it; it is represented as grieved, because it does not perform its usual office of exhilarating the heart; and the figure is thus an image of the desolation of the land. ¶ *The vine lan-*

8. The mirth of <sup>s</sup> tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.

9. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be

Jer. 7. 34. Hos. 2. 11. Rev. 18. 22.

bitter to them that drink it.

10. The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in.

11. There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

8. Ceased is the joy of tabrets;  
Ended is the sound of them that exult;  
Ceased the joy of the harp.
9. No more shall they drink wine with a song;  
Bitter is the intoxicating draught to them that drink it.
10. The city of desolation is broken down;  
Every house is obstructed so that none can enter.
11. There is a cry for wine in the streets;  
All joy is departed—  
The mirth of the land is gone.

*guisheth.* It is sickly and unfruitful, because there are none to cultivate it as formerly. ¶ *All the merryhearted.* Probably the reference is mainly to those who were once made happy at the plentiful feast, and at the splendid entertainments where wine abounded. They look now upon the wide-spread desolation of the land, and mourn.

8. *The mirth of tabrets.* The joy and exultation which is produced by tabrets. On the word *tabret*, תָּבַר, see Notes on ch. v. 12. ¶ *The joy of the harp ceaseth.* On the word *harp*, קִנֹּר, see Notes on ch. v. 12.

9. *Drink wine with a song.* That is, accompanied with a song, as the usual mode was in their feasts. The sense is, that the usual hilarity and joy shall cease by reason of the heavy national calamity. ¶ *Strong drink.* On the word חֲמֵץ, see Note, ch. v. 11. ¶ *Shall be bitter,* &c. They shall cease to find pleasure in it, in consequence of the general calamities that have come upon the nation.

10. *The city of confusion.* That Jerusalem is here intended there can be no doubt. The name "city of confusion," is probably given to it by anticipation of what it would be; that is, as

it appeared in prophetic vision (see Note, ch. i. 1) to Isaiah. He gave to it a name that would describe its state when these calamities should have come upon it. The word rendered *confusion*, תֹּהוּ, *Tôhû*, does not denote *disorder* or *anarchy*, but is a word expressive of emptiness, vanity, destitution of form, waste, &c. It occurs Gen. i. 2, "And the earth was *without form*, and void." In Job xxvi. 7, it is rendered "the empty place;" in 1 Sam. xii. 21; Isa. xlv. 18, 19, *in vain*; and usually emptiness, vanity, confusion. See Isa. xxiv. 10, xl. 17, xli. 29. In Job xii. 24, Ps. cvii. 40, it denotes a wilderness. Here it means that the city would be desolate, empty, and depopulated. ¶ *Is broken down.* Its walls and dwellings are in ruins. ¶ *Every house is shut up.* That is, either because every man, fearful of danger, would fasten his doors, so that enemies could not enter; or more probably, the entrance to every house would be so obstructed by ruins, as to render it impossible to enter it.

11. *There is a crying for wine in the streets.* All joy would be gone. The inhabitants of the city, turned from their dwellings, would cry for wine to alleviate their distress, and to sustain

12. In <sup>b</sup> the city is left desolation, and the gate <sup>i</sup> is smitten with destruction.

13. When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, *there shall be* <sup>k</sup> as the

<sup>h</sup> Lam. 1. 1:

<sup>k</sup> ch. 6. 13. 17. 5, 6.

<sup>i</sup> Lam. 2. 9.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>e</sup> Mic. 2. 12.

shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.

14. They <sup>l</sup> shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea.

<sup>l</sup> Zeph 2. 14, 15.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

12. In the city is left desolation,  
And the gate is smitten into ruins.

13. Yet thus shall it be in the midst of the land, in the midst of the people,  
As the shaking of an olive-tree,  
As the gleaning when the vintage is finished.

14. These shall lift up their voice;  
They shall sing for the exaltation of JEHOVAH;  
They shall shout from the sea.

them in their calamity. Comp. ch. xvi. 8—10. ¶ *All joy is darkened.* Is gone, has departed, like the joyful light at the setting of the sun.

12. *And the gate is smitten with destruction.* The word rendered "destruction" may denote "a crash." Gesenius. The idea is, that the gates of the city, once so secure, are now battered down and demolished, so that the enemy can enter freely. Thus far is a description of the calamities that would come upon the nation. The following verses show that, though the desolation would be general, yet that a few of the inhabitants would be left—a circumstance thrown in to mitigate the prospect of the impending ruin.

13. *In the midst of the land.* That is, in the midst of the land of Canaan. ¶ There shall be *as the shaking of an olive-tree.* A few shall be left, as in gathering olives a few will remain on the highest and outermost boughs. See Notes on ch. xvii. 5, 6.

14. *They shall lift up their voice.* They who are left in the land; who are not carried away to Babylon. To lift up the voice, in the Scriptures, may denote either grief or joy, Comp. Gen. xxi. 16; 1 Sam. xxiv. 16; Judges ii. 4; Ruth i. 9, &c., where to lift up the voice is connected with weeping; and

Ezek. xxi. 22; Ps. xciii. 3; Isa. xl. 9, xlii. 11, &c., where it is connected with exultation and joy. The latter is evidently the idea here, that the few who should remain in the land, or who should escape from captivity by fleeing to neighbouring countries, would lift up their voice with exultation that they had escaped. ¶ *They shall sing for the majesty of the LORD.* They shall sing on account of the glory or goodness of JEHOVAH, who had so mercifully kept them and preserved them. ¶ *They shall cry aloud.* That is, with praise and rejoicing. ¶ *From the sea.* From the isles and coasts of the Mediterranean sea, whither they would have escaped, and where they would find a refuge. No doubt many of the inhabitants adjacent to the sea, when they found the land invaded, and saw the impending ruin, would betake themselves to the neighbouring islands, and find safety there until the danger should be overpast. Lowth renders this,

The waters shall resound with the exaltation of Jehovah, &c.

where he supposes מים should be rendered as if pointed מים, waters, not as it is in the present Hebrew text, ים, *from the sea.* The sense is not materially different; but there seems to

15. Wherefore glorify <sup>m</sup> ye the LORD in the <sup>l</sup> fires, *even* the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles <sup>n</sup> of the sea.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Pet. 3. 15.

<sup>l</sup> or, *valleys*.

<sup>n</sup> Zeph. 2. 11.

NEW TRANSLATION.

15. Wherefore in the East glorify JEHOVAH;  
In the isles of the sea the name of JEHOVAH the God of Israel.

be no good reason for departing from the usual interpretation.

15. *Wherefore glorify ye the LORD.* The prophet, in this verse, calls upon the people to join in the praise of JEHOVAH, wherever they are scattered. In the previous verse he describes the scattered few who were left in the land, or who had escaped to the adjacent islands in the sea, as celebrating the praises of God where they were. In this verse he calls on *all* to join in this wherever they were scattered. ¶ *In the fires.* Margin, *valleys*. The LXX read, *in the islands*, ἐν τοῖς νήσοις. The Chaldee, "Therefore, when light shall come to the just, they shall glorify the Lord." Lowth supposes that the word נִמְרוֹת should have been נְמוֹת, *islands*, or *coasts*. But the MSS. do not give any authority for this reading; the only authority which Lowth refers to being that of the LXX. Other conjectures have been made by others; but all without any authority from MSS. The Hebrew word in the plural form does not occur elsewhere in the Scriptures. The proper signification of the word נִמְרוֹ, *or*, is *light*, and it is applied (a) to *daylight*, or *daybreak*, 1 Sam. xiv. 36; Neh. viii. 3; (b) to *light*, from daybreak to mid-day, Job xxiv. 14; (c) the sun, Job xxxi. 26, xxxvii. 21; (d) *light*, as the emblem of happiness; (e) *light*, as the emblem of life, instruction, &c. It is also used to denote *fire*, Ezek. v. 2; Isa. xlv. 16, xlvii. 14. In the plural form it is applied, in connexion with the word *Thummim*, to the gems, or images, which were on the breast-plate of the High Priest, and from which responses were obtained. Ex. xxviii. 30; Lev. viii. 8; Ezra ii. 63. Probably it was thus used to denote the *splendor*

or beauty of the gems there set, or perhaps the *light* or instruction which was the result of consulting the oracle. The proper meaning of the word is, however, *light*, and it usually and naturally suggests the idea of the *morning light*, the *aurora*; perhaps, also, the *northern light*, or the *Aurora Borealis*. It in no instance means *caves*, or *valleys*. *Vitringa* supposes it referred to *caves*, and that the address was to the *Troglodytes*, or those who had been driven from their homes, and compelled to take up their residence in *caves*. The word probably refers either to the regions of the morning light—the rising of the sun; or of the northern light—the *Aurora Borealis*; and in either case, the reference is, doubtless, to those who should be carried away to *Babylon*, and who were called on there by the prophet to glorify God. "In those regions of *light*, where the morning light dawns; or where the northern skies are illuminated at night, there glorify God." The reasons for this opinion are, (1.) That such is the natural and proper sense of the word. It properly refers to *light*, and *not* to *caves*, to *valleys*, or to *islands*. (2.) The parallelism, the construction demands such an interpretation. It would then be equivalent to calling on the scattered people to glorify God in the East and in the West; in the regions of the rising sun and in the coasts of the west; or wherever they were scattered. And the sense is, (1) that they should be *encouraged* to do this by the prospect of a return; (2) that it was their *duty* still to do this wherever they were; and (3) that the worship of the true God should be, in fact, continued and celebrated, though his people were scattered, and driven to distant lands. ¶ *In the isles of the*

16. From the <sup>1</sup> uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, <sup>2</sup> My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

<sup>1</sup> wing. <sup>2</sup> leanness to me, or, my secret to me.

2 ch. 48. 8. Jer. 5. 11.

NEW TRANSLATION.

16. From the uttermost part of the earth we hear songs;  
 "Glory to the righteous!"  
 But I say,  
 "Alas! my leanness, my leanness!"  
 "Woe is me! the treacherous deal treacherously!"  
 "Yea, with treachery they deal treacherously!"

sea. The coasts and islands of the Mediterranean, ver. 14.

16. *From the uttermost part of the earth.* The word *earth* here seems to be taken in its usual sense, and to denote countries without the bounds of Palestine; and the phrase is equivalent to *remote regions, or distant countries*. See Note, ch. xi. 12. The prophet here represents himself as *hearing* those songs from distant lands as a grand chorus, the sound of which came in upon, and pervaded Palestine. The worship of God should be still continued, though the temple should be destroyed, and the inhabitants of the land dispersed, and though the land of Judea should be a wide-spread desolation. Amidst the general wreck and woe, it was *some* consolation that the worship of JEHOVAH was celebrated anywhere. ¶ *Have we heard songs.* Or, *we do* hear songs. The distant celebrations of the goodness of God break on the ear, and amidst the general calamity these songs of the scattered people of God comfort the heart. ¶ *Glory to the righteous.* This is the burden and substance of those songs. Their general import and design is, to show that there shall be honor to the righteous, to the people of God. They are now afflicted and scattered. Their temple is destroyed, and their land waste, and ruin spreads over the graves of their fathers. Yet amidst these desolations, their confidence in God is unshaken; their reliance on him is firm. They still believe that there shall be honor and

glory to the just, and that God will be their protector and avenger. These assurances serve to sustain them in their afflictions, and to shed a mild and cheering influence amidst the desolations of the land. ¶ *But I said.* But I, the prophet, am constrained to say. This the prophet says respecting himself, viewing himself as left in the land of Canaan; or more probably he personifies, in this declaration, Jerusalem, or the inhabitants of the land that still remained there. The songs that came in from distant lands; the echoing praises from the exiles in the east and the west seeming to meet and mingle over Judea, only served to render the abounding desolation more apparent and striking. Those distant praises recalled the solemn services of the temple, and happiness of other times, and led those remaining, and who witnessed the desolations, to exclaim, "my leanness," &c. ¶ *My leanness, my leanness.* The language of Jerusalem, and the land of Judea. This language expresses calamity. The loss of flesh is emblematic of a condition of poverty, want, affliction—as sickness and affliction waste away the flesh, and take away the strength. Ps. cix. 24:

My knees are weak through fasting,  
 And my flesh falleth off fatness.

Ps. cii. 5:

By reason of the voice of my groaning  
 My bones cleave to my flesh.

See also Lam. iii. 4; Job vi. 12; xix. 20. Leanness is also put to denote the displeasure of God in Ps. cvi. 15:

17. Fear, <sup>p</sup> and the pit, and the | snare, *are* upon thee, O inhabitant  
 of the earth.

p Jer. 48. 43, 44.

NEW TRANSLATION.

17. The terror, and the pit, and the snare,  
 Are upon thee, O inhabitant of the land!

And he gave them their request;  
 But sent leanness into their soul.

• Comp. Isa. x. 16. ¶ *The treacherous dealers.* The invaders; the foreign nations that disregard covenants and laws; that pursue their course by deceit, and stratagem, and fraud. Most conquests are made by what are called the *stratagems* of war; that is, by a course of perfidy and deception. There can be no doubt that the usual course of conquest was pursued in regard to Jerusalem. This whole clause is exceedingly emphatic. The word implying *treachery* (פֶּהַח) is repeated no less than *five* times in various forms in this single clause, and shows how strongly the idea had taken possession of the mind of the prophet.

17. *Fear, and the pit.* This verse is an explanation of the cause of the wretchedness referred to in the previous verse. The same expression is found in Jer. xlviii. 43, in the destruction that should come upon Moab, a description which Jeremiah probably copied from Isaiah. There is in the original a *paronomasia* that cannot be retained in a translation, a figure that is very common in the sacred writings. פֶּהַח וְפִתּוּחַ וְפִתּוּחַ וְפִתּוּחַ, *Pähhädh vā Phähhäth, vā Phähh,* where the form *Pähh* occurs in each word. The language is emphatic, and designed to indicate the fact that calamity met them everywhere. The sense is, that they were nowhere safe; that if they escaped one danger, they immediately fell into another. The expression is equivalent to that which occurs in the writings of the Latin classics,

"Incidit in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdin."

The same idea, that if a man should

escape from one calamity, he would fall into another, is expressed in another form in Amos v. 19:

As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him;  
 Or went into a house, and leaned his hand on the wall,  
 And a serpent bit him.

In the passage before us, there is an *advance* from one danger to another, or the subsequent one is more to be dreaded than the preceding. The figure is taken from the mode of taking wild beasts, where various nets, toils, or pit-falls were employed to secure them. The word "*Fear*" פֶּהַח, *Pähhädh*, denotes anything that was used to frighten or arouse the wild beasts in hunting, and that tended to drive them into the pit-fall that was prepared for them. Among the Romans the name "*fears*," *formidines*, was given to lines, or cords strung with feathers of all colours, which when they fluttered in the air or were shaken, frightened the beasts into the pits, or the birds into the snares which were prepared to take them. Seneca de Ira, B. ii. ch. xii.; Virg. Æn. xii. 749; Geor. iii. 372. It is possible that this may be referred to here under the name of "*fear*." The word "*pit*," פִתּוּחַ, *Pähhäth*, denotes the pit-fall; a hole dug in the ground, and covered over with bushes, leaves, &c., into which they might fall unawares. The word "*snare*," נֶבֶל, *Pähh*, denotes a net, or gin, and perhaps refers to a series of nets enclosing at first a large space of ground, in which the wild beasts were supposed to be, and then drawn by degrees into a narrow compass, so that they could not escape. *Lowth.*



18. And it shall come to pass, *that* he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the <sup>9</sup> windows from

on high are open, and the foundations <sup>r</sup> of the earth do shake.

19. The earth <sup>s</sup> is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

g Gen. 7. 11.

r Ps. 18. 7.

s Jer. 4. 23

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

18. And it shall be that he who fleeth from the voice of the terror  
 Shall fall into the pit;  
 And he that cometh up from the midst of the pit  
 Shall be taken in the snare;  
 For the flood-gates from on high are opened,  
 And the foundations of the earth do shake.
19. The land is grievously shaken;  
 The land is utterly shattered to pieces;  
 The land is violently moved.

18. *From the noise of the fear.* A cry or shout was made in hunting, designed to arouse the game, and drive it to the pit-fall. The image is taken from hunting, and means here that calamities should be multiplied in all the land, and that if the inhabitants endeavoured to avoid one danger, they would fall into another. ¶ *And he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit, &c.* A figure taken still from hunting. It was possible that some of the more strong and active of the wild beasts driven into the pit-fall would spring out, and attempt to escape, yet they might be secured by snares or gins purposely contrived for such an occurrence. So the prophet says, that though a few might escape the calamities that would at first threaten to overthrow them, yet they would have no security. They would immediately fall into others, and be destroyed. ¶ *For the windows on high are opened.* This is evidently taken from the account of the deluge in Gen. vii. 11: "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, in the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows (or flood-gates, Margin) of heaven were opened." The word *windows* here, *צַדְיָוָה*, is the same which

occurs in Genesis, and properly denotes a grate, a lattice, a window, and then any opening, as a sluice, or flood-gate, and is applied to a tempest or a deluge, because, when the rain descends, it seems like opening sluices or flood-gates in the sky. The sense here is, that calamities had come upon the nation resembling the universal deluge. ¶ *And the foundations of the earth do shake.* An image derived from an earthquake—a figure also denoting far-spreading calamities.

19. *The earth.* Note, ver. 1. This verse describes the effect of the agitation referred to in ver. 18. ¶ *Is utterly broken down.* The effect as it were of an earthquake, where everything is thrown into commotion and ruin. ¶ *The earth is moved exceedingly.* Everything in this verse is intense and emphatic. The verbs are in the strongest form of emphasis, "By breaking, the land is broken;" "by scattering, the land is scattered;" "by commotion, the land is moved." The repetition also of the expression in the same sense three times is a strong form of emphasis; and the whole expression is designed to denote the utter desolation and ruin that had come upon the land.

20. The earth shall reel <sup>t</sup> to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed <sup>u</sup> like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy <sup>x</sup> upon it; and it shall fall,

<sup>t</sup> ch. 19. 14.

<sup>u</sup> Rev. 21. 1.

<sup>x</sup> Zec. 5. 5—8.

and not rise again.

21. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall <sup>1</sup> punish the host of the high ones *that are* on high, and the kings <sup>v</sup> of the earth upon the earth.

<sup>1</sup> visit upon.

<sup>y</sup> Ps. 76. 12.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

20. The land reeleth like a drunkard;  
And it moveth to and fro like a hammock:  
For her iniquity lieth heavy upon her,  
And she shall rise no more.

21. And it shall be in that day,  
JEHOVAH shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high,  
And the kings of the earth upon the earth.

20. *The earth.* See Note, ver. 1.  
¶ *Like a drunkard.* This is descriptive of the agitation that occurs in an earthquake, when everything is shaken from its foundation, and when trees and towers move to and fro, shaken by the mighty concussion. The same figure is used in ch. xxix. 9. See also the description of a tempest at sea, in Ps. cvii. 27:

"They reel to and fro,  
And stagger like a drunken man,  
And are at their wit's end."

¶ *And shall be removed like a cottage.* Or, rather, shall move or vacillate (התנודד) like a cottage. The word cottage (מִלְכָּה, from לָן, to pass the night, to lodge for a night) means, properly, a temporary shed or lodge for the watchman of a garden or vineyard, while the fruit was ripening. See Note, ch. i. 8. Sometimes these cottages were erected in the form of a hut; and sometimes they were a species of *hanging bed*, or *couch*, that was suspended from the limbs of trees. They were made either by interweaving the limbs of a tree, or by suspending them by cords from the branches of trees, or by extending a cord or cords from one tree to another, and laying a couch or bed on the cords. They were thus made to afford a convenient place for observation, and also to afford security from the access of wild beasts. Travellers in the East even now resort to such a

temporary lodge for security. See Niebuhr's Description of Arabia. Those lodges were easily moved to and fro, and swung about by the wind—and that is the idea in the verse before us. The whole land was agitated as with an earthquake; it reeled like a drunkard; it moved, and was unsettled as the hanging couch on the trees was driven to and fro by the wind. ¶ *And the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it.* Like a vast incumbent weight on a dwelling which it cannot sustain, and beneath which it is crushed. ¶ *And it shall fall, and not rise again.* This does not mean, as I apprehend, that the nation thus agitated should never be restored to its former dignity and rank as a people—for the prophet immediately (ver. 23) speaks of such a restoration, and of the re-establishment of the Theocracy; but it must mean that *in those convulsions* it would not rise. It would not be able to recover itself; it would certainly fall, and be prostrated. As we say of a drunkard, he will certainly fall; he may stumble often, and partially recover himself, yet he will certainly fall so as not then to be able to recover himself, so it would be with that agitated and convulsed land. They would make many efforts to recover themselves, and would partially succeed, yet they would certainly fall, and be completely prostrate in the dust.

21. *In that day.* In that future time;

22. And they shall be gathered together <sup>1</sup> as prisoners are gathered in <sup>2</sup> the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be <sup>3</sup> visited.

<sup>1</sup> with the gathering of prisoners.

<sup>2</sup> or, dungeon.

<sup>3</sup> or, found wanting.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

22. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered together for the dungeon;  
And shall be shut up in the prison,  
And after many days they shall be visited.

the time, as I suppose, of the captivity at Babylon. ¶ *Shall punish, &c.* Heb., as in the margin, *shall visit upon.* See Note, ch. x. 12. ¶ *The host of the high ones.* There have been various interpretations of this expression. Jerome understands it of the host of heaven, and thinks it refers to the fact, that in the day of judgment God shall judge, not only earthly things but celestial, and especially the hosts of heaven, the sun, and moon, and stars, as having been the objects of idolatrous worship. See Deut. iv. 19; Daniel viii. 10, 13. Comp. Ps. xviii. 27; Jer. xxv. 30, where the words, "on high," are used to denote heaven. Aben Ezra supposes that by the phrase is meant *angels*, who preside over the governors and kings of the earth, in accordance with the ancient opinion that each country and kingdom was under the tutelage of guardian angels. To this Rosenmüller seems to assent, and to suppose that the beings thus referred to were *evil spirits* or demons, to whom the kingdoms of the world were subject. Others, among whom is Grotius, have supposed that the reference is to the images of the sun, moon, and stars, which were erected in high places, and adored by the Assyrians. But probably the reference is to those who occupied places of power and trust in the ecclesiastical arrangement of Judea, the high priest and priests, who exercised a vast dominion over the nation, and who, in many respects, were regarded as elevated even over the kings and princes of the land. The comparison of rulers with the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, is common in the Scriptures; and

this comparison was supposed peculiarly to befit ecclesiastical rulers, who were regarded as in a particular manner the lights of the nation. ¶ *Kings of the earth.* Kings and princes of the land of Judea. ¶ *Upon the earth.* Beneath, or inferior to those who had places of superior trust and honor. The priests and ecclesiastical rulers are represented as occupying the superior rank; the princes and rulers, in a civil sense, as in a condition of less honor and responsibility. This was probably the usual mode in which the ecclesiastical and civil offices were estimated in the land of Judea.

22. *And they shall be gathered together.* That is, those who occupy posts of honor and influence in the ecclesiastical and civil polity of the land. ¶ *As prisoners.* Margin, as in the Hebrew, "*with the gathering of prisoners.*" The reference is to the custom of collecting prisoners and captives taken in war, and chaining them together by the hands and feet, and thrusting them in large companies into a prison. ¶ *In the pit.* Marg., "*or, dungeon.*" The sense is, that the rulers of the land should be made captives, and treated as prisoners of war. This was undoubtedly true in the time of the captivity under Nebuchadnezzar. The people were assembled; were regarded as captives; and were conveyed together to a distant land. ¶ *And shall be shut up in the prison.* Probably this is not intended to be taken literally, but to denote that they would be as secure as if they were shut up in prison. Their prison may have been the distant land of Chaldaea, where they were secured and inclosed as in a

23. Then <sup>2</sup> the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign gloriously.

z Ezek. 32. 7.

<sup>1</sup> or, there shall be glory before his ancients.

NEW TRANSLATION.

23. And the moon shall be confounded,  
And the sun ashamed,  
When JEHOVAH of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,  
And before the elders in glory.

prison seventy years. ¶ *And after many days.* If this refers, as I have supposed, to the captivity at Babylon, then these "many days" refer to the period of seventy years. ¶ *Shall they be visited.* Marg., *found wanting*. The word here used, *נָחַץ*, *Pāqādh*, may be used either in a good or bad sense; either to visit, for the purpose of reviewing, numbering, or aiding; or to visit, for the purpose of punishing. It is probably, in the Scriptures, most frequently used in the sense of punishing. See Job xxxi. 14, xxxv. 15; Isa. xxvi. 14; 1 Sam. xv. 2; Ps. lxxxix. 33; Jer. ix. 25. But it is often used in the sense of taking account of; reviewing or mustering, as a military host. See Num. i. 44, iii. 39; 1 Kings xx. 15; Isa. xiii. 4. In this place it may be taken in either of these senses, as may be best supposed to suit the connexion. To me it seems that the connexion seems to require the idea of a visitation for the purpose of relief or of deliverance; and to refer to the fact that at the end of that time there would be a reviewing, a mustering, an enrolment of those who should have been thus carried away to their distant prison-house, to ascertain how many remained, and to marshal them for their return to the land of their fathers. See the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The word here used has sometimes the sense expressed in the margin, "*found wanting*," (Comp. Isa. xxxviii. 10; 1 Sam. xx. 6, xxv. 15;) but such a sense does not suit the connexion here. I regard the verse as an indication of future mercy and deliverance. They would be thrown into prison, and treated as captives of war; but

after a long time they would be visited by the great deliverer of their nation, their covenant-keeping God, and re-conducted to the land of their fathers.

23. *Then the moon shall be confounded.* The heavenly bodies are often employed in the sacred writings to denote the princes and kings of the earth. These expressions are not to be pressed *ad unguem*, as if the sun denoted one thing, and the moon another; but they are general poetic expressions, designed to represent rulers, princes, and magistrates of all kinds. Comp. Joel ii. 30, 31; Ezek. xxxii. 7. ¶ *Shall be confounded.* Shall be covered with shame. That is, shall appear to shine with diminished beauty, as if it were *ashamed* in the superior glory that would shine around it. The sense is, that when the people should be returned to their land, the theocracy would be restored, and the magnificence of the kings and other civil rulers would be dimmed in the superior splendor of the reign of God. *Perhaps* there may be a reference here to the time when JEHOVAH would reign in Jerusalem through, or by means of, THE MESSIAH. ¶ *In mount Zion.* Note, ch. i. 8. This would take place subsequently to the captivity; and pre-eminently under the reign of THE MESSIAH. ¶ *And before his ancients.* That is, before the elders of the people; in the presence of those entrusted with authority and rule. ¶ *Gloriously.* He should reign gloriously when his laws should be respected and obeyed; when his character as king and ruler should be developed; and when, under his sceptre, his kingdom should be augmented and extended. On this glad

## CHAPTER XXV.

1. O LORD, thou *art* my God;  
I will <sup>a</sup> exalt thee, I will praise

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 46. 10.

thy name; for thou hast done wonderful *things*; *thy* counsels of old *are* faithfulness <sup>b</sup> and truth.

<sup>b</sup> Num. 23. 19.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

1. O JEHOVAH, thou art my God;  
I will exalt thee; I will praise thy name:  
For thou hast done wonderful [things];  
Thine ancient purposes [thou hast shown] to be faithful and true.

prospect the eye of the prophet was fixed; and this prospect was the bright and splendid object in the "vision" that served to relieve the darkness that was coming upon the nation. Present calamities may be borne, with the hope that JEHOVAH will reign more gloriously hereafter; and the effect of all shall be to exalt JEHOVAH in the view of the nations. It may be added, that when JEHOVAH, by the Messiah, shall reign over all the earth, all the glory of the wisest and greatest princes and monarchs shall be dimmed; the celebrity of their wisdom, and power, and plans shall be obscured in the superior splendor of the wisdom, power, and plans of God, in reigning through the laws of his Son over the human race. Come that blessed day; and speedily let the glory of the moon be confounded, and the sun be ashamed, and all inferior magnificence fade away before the splendor of the Sun of Righteousness.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## ANALYSIS.

For the general design and scope of this chapter, see the analysis to ch. xxiv. It is a song of praise to God for the anticipated deliverance of his people from the bondage at Babylon. The desolation of Jerusalem and Judah had been described in ch. xxiv.; that chapter had closed with an intimation that JEHOVAH would again reign in glory on Mount Zion (ver. 23); and in view of this future deliverance, the prophet breaks out into this beautiful song of praise. It was not unusual for the prophets to

express by anticipation such songs of praise as should be celebrated by the people in times of signal deliverance. See Notes on ch. xii. This song of praise is one of the most beautiful that is to be found in the writings of Isaiah. The essential idea is, that which was hinted at in ch. xxiv. 23, that JEHOVAH would reign with a glory that would obscure the brightness of the sun and the moon on Mount Zion. Filled with the idea, the prophet fixes the eye on those future glories, and declares what shall occur *under* that reign. He sees JEHOVAH reigning there for a long series of years; and *during* that reign he sees (ver. 6) that he would provide a way then by which the darkness might be removed from all nations (ver. 7); that he would originate that plan by which death should be swallowed up in victory (ver. 8); and that there he would execute a plan by which all his enemies should be laid low, ver. 9—12. The hymn is designed, therefore, to celebrate the goodness and faithfulness of God in fulfilling his ancient promises, and delivering his people from their long captivity by the destruction of Babylon (ver. 1—5); and the future glories that would shine forth under the reign of JEHOVAH on Mount Zion, including the arrangements of redeeming mercy for the world.

1. O Lord, thou art my God. The prophet speaks, not in his own name, but in the name of the people that should be delivered from bondage. The sense is, that JEHOVAH had manifested himself as their covenant-keeping and

2. For thou hast made of a city <sup>c</sup> a palace of strangers to be no  
an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: city; it shall never be built.

c Jer. 51. 37.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

For thou hast made of the city an heap;  
Of a defenced citadel a pile of ruins;  
The palace of foreigners, that it should be no more a city;—  
It shall never be built again.

faithful God; and that in view of his faithfulness in keeping his promises, they now had demonstration that he was their God. ¶ *I will exalt thee.* A form of expression often used to denote *praise* (Ps. cxviii. 28, cxlv. 1), meaning, that the worshipper would exalt God in the view of his own mind; he would regard him as above all other beings and objects. ¶ *For thou hast done wonderful things.* On the meaning of the Heb. <sup>נִפְלְאוֹת</sup>, see Note, ch ix. 6. ¶ *Of old.* Which were formed and revealed long since. The counsels referred to are those respecting the delivery of his people from bondage which had been expressed even long before their captivity commenced, and which would be now completely and triumphantly fulfilled. ¶ *Are faithfulness.* Have been brought to pass; are stable; do not fail. ¶ *And truth.* Heb. <sup>אֱמֶת</sup>, Amen. So it is rendered by the Vulgate. LXX, *γένοιο, Let it be.* The word is, however, used probably, as expressed by our translators, to denote that the purposes of God were *firm*, and would certainly be fulfilled.

2. *For thou hast made.* This is supposed to be uttered by the Jews who should return from Babylon, and therefore refers to what *would have been* seen by them. In their time it would have occurred that God would have made of the city an heap. ¶ *Of a city.* Of Babylon. This I suppose the whole scope of the passage requires us to understand. There has been, however, a great variety of interpretation of this passage. Grotius supposed that Samaria was intended; Calvin, that the word is used *collectively*, and that various cities

are intended; Mariana, that Jerusalem was intended; Piscator, that Rome, the seat of Antichrist was intended. Jerome says that the Jews generally understand it of Rome. Aben Ezra and Kimchi, however, understand it to refer to many cities which they say will be destroyed in the times of Gog and Magog. Nearly all these opinions may be seen subjected to an examination, and shown to be unfounded, in Vitringa. ¶ *An heap.* It is reduced to ruins, as Babylon was, in fact. See Notes on ch. xiii. xiv. The ruin of the city commenced when it was taken by Cyrus, and the Jews were set at liberty; it was not *completed* until many centuries after. The form of the Hebrew here is, "thou hast placed *from* a city to a ruin;" that is, thou hast changed it *from* being a city to being a pile of ruins. ¶ *Of a defenced city.* A city fortified, and made strong against the approach of an enemy. How true this was of Babylon may be seen in the description prefixed to chapter xiii. ¶ *A palace.* This word properly signifies the residence of a prince or monarch. Jer. xxx. 18; Amos i. 4, 7, 10, 12. Here it is applied to Babylon on account of its splendor, as if it were a vast palace, the residence of princes. ¶ *Of strangers.* Foreigners; a term often given to the inhabitants of foreign lands, and especially to the Babylonians. See Note, ch. i. 7. Comp. Ezek. xxviii. 7; Joel iii. 17. It means that this was by way of eminence *THE* city of the foreigners; the capital of the whole pagan world; the city where the foreigners congregated and abode. ¶ *It shall never be built.* See Notes on ch. xiii. 19—22.

3. Therefore shall the strong people glorify<sup>d</sup> thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee. terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

4. For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the brought low.

<sup>d</sup> Rev. 11. 13.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

3. Therefore shall the mighty people praise thee,  
The city of the formidable nations shall fear thee.
4. For thou hast been a defence to the poor;  
A defence to the needy in his distress;  
A refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat;  
When the blast of the formidable was like a storm against a wall.
5. As the heat in a dry place [by the shadow of a cloud],  
The noise of the strangers shalt thou humble;

3. *The strong people.* The mighty and fierce nations. The reference here is not, probably, to the Babylonians, but to the surrounding nations. The deliverance of the Jews, and the destruction of Babylon, would be such striking events, that they would lead the surrounding nations to acknowledge that it was the hand of God. ¶ *The city of the terrible nations.* The word "city" here is taken probably in a collective sense, to denote the cities, or the strong places, of the surrounding nations which would be brought thus to tremble before God. The destruction of a city so proud and wicked as Babylon would alarm them; and would lead them to fear that they might share the same fate, especially as many of them had been associated in oppressing the now delivered people of the land of Judea.

4. *For thou hast been a strength to the poor.* Thou hast sustained and upheld them in their trials and wants, and thou hast delivered them. God is often spoken of as the strength of his people. Isa. xxvi. 4: "In the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength." Ps. xxvii. 1: "The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid." Ps. xxviii. 8, xxix. 11, xxxi. 2, xli. 1; Isa. xlv. 24 — By the "poor" here and the "needy," undoubtedly are meant the

captive Jews who had been stripped of their wealth, and carried from their homes and confined in Babylon. ¶ *A refuge.* A place of safety; a retreat; a protection. God is often spoken of as such a refuge. Deut. xxxiii. 27: "The eternal God is thy refuge." 2 Sam. xxii. 3; Ps. ix. 9, xiv. 6, xli. 1, 7, 11, lvii. 1, lix. 16. ¶ *From the storm.* This word usually denotes a tempest of wind and rain. Here it is put for calamity and affliction. The figure is common in all languages. ¶ *A shadow from the heat.* See Note, ch. iv. 6, xvi. 3. Comp. ch. xxxii. 2. ¶ *When the blast of the terrible ones.* Of the fierce, mighty, invading enemies. When they sweep down all before them as a furious tempest does. ¶ *Is as a storm against the wall.* For wall here, קיר, Lowth proposes to read קר, from קרר, to be cold, or cool, and supposes that this means a winter's storm. In this interpretation also Vitranga and Capellus coincide. But there is no need of supposing an error in the text. The idea is, probably, that of a fierce driving storm that would prostrate walls and houses; meaning a violent tempest, and intending to describe in a striking manner the severity of the calamities that had come upon the nation.

5. *Thou shalt bring down.* Thou shalt

6. And in this mountain <sup>c</sup> shall feast of wines on the lees, of fat things the LORD of hosts make unto all things full of marrow, of wines <sup>s</sup> on people a feast <sup>t</sup> of fat things, a the lees well refined.

<sup>c</sup> ch. 2. 2, 3.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. 22. 2, &c.

<sup>g</sup> Ca. 5. 1.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

As the heat by the shadow of a cloud,

The exultation of the formidable ones shalt thou humble.

6. And JEHOVAH of hosts, in this mountain, shall make for all people,  
A feast of delicacies, a feast of old wines,  
Of delicacies exquisitely rich, and of old wines well refined.

humble, or shalt silence. ¶ *The noise.* The tumult; the sound which they make in entering into battle; or the note of triumph, and the sound of revelry. The phrase may refer either to their shout of exultation over their vanquished foes; or to the usual sound of revelry; or to the hum of business in a vast city. ¶ *Of strangers.* Of foreigners. Note, ver. 2. This refers, I suppose, to the Babylonians, who exulted in their triumph over captive Judea, and who celebrated their victory in their magnificent city with the sounds of revelry. ¶ *As the heat in a dry place.* The parallelism here requires that we should suppose the phrase, "with the shadow of a cloud," to be supplied in this hemistich, as it is obscurely expressed in our translation by the word "even," and it would then read thus:—

As the heat in a dry place (by the shadow of a cloud),

The noise of the strangers shalt thou humble;

As the heat by the shadow of a cloud,

The exultation of the formidable ones shalt thou bring low.

The idea thus is plain. Heat pours down intensely on the earth, and if unabated, would wither up every green thing, and dry up every stream and fountain. But a cloud intervenes, and gives refreshment to the earth, and checks the burning rays of the sun. So the wrath of the "terrible ones"—the anger of the Babylonians raged against the Jews. But the mercy of God interposed. It was like the intervening of a cloud to shut out the burning rays of the sun. It stayed the fury of their wrath, and rendered them impotent to do injury, just as the intense burning

rays of the sun are completely checked by an interposing cloud. ¶ *The branch of the terrible ones.* This is a very unhappy translation. The word זָמִיר, *zāmīr*, is indeed used to denote a branch, or bough, as derived from זָמַר, to prune a vine; but it also has the sense of a song—a song of praise, or a song of exultation, from a second signification of זָמַר, to sing; perhaps from the song with which the work of the vineyard was usually accompanied. See the verb used in this sense in Judges v. 3; Ps. ix. 12, xxx. 5, xlvii. 7; and the word here (*zāmīr*) used in the sense of a song in Ps. cxix. 54; 2 Sam. xxiii. 1; Job xxxv. 10. Here it is, undoubtedly, used in the sense of a song, meaning either a shout of victory or of revelry; and the idea of the prophet is, that this would be brought low by the destruction of Babylon, and the return of the captive Jews to their own land.

6. *And in this mountain.* In Mount Zion; that is, in Jerusalem. The following verses undoubtedly refer to the times of the Messiah. Several of the expressions used here are quoted in the New Testament, showing that the reference is to the Messiah, and to the fact that his kingdom would commence in Jerusalem, and then extend to all people. The passage is highly poetic and exceedingly beautiful. ¶ *Shall the LORD of hosts.* See Note, ch. i. 9. ¶ *Make unto all people.* Provide for all people. He shall adapt the provisions of salvation not only to the Jews, but to the calamities and woes of men everywhere. This is one of the truths on which Isaiah loved



7. And he will <sup>1</sup> destroy in this mountain the face of the covering <sup>2</sup> cast over all people, and the vail <sup>h</sup> that is spread over all nations.

<sup>1</sup> swallow up.

<sup>2</sup> covered.

A 2 Cor. 3. 15, 16.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

7. And in this mountain JEHOVAH will remove the face of the covering cast over all people,  
And the vail that is spread over all nations.

to dwell, and which, in fact, constitutes one of the peculiarities of his prophecy. It is one of the chief glories of the gospel that it is **UNTO ALL PEOPLE**. See Isa. lvi. 7; Dan. v. 19, vii. 14. Comp. Luke ii. 10: "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be **UNTO ALL PEOPLE**." ¶ *A feast*. A feast, or entertainment, was usually observed, as it is now, on occasion of a great victory, or any other signal success. It is, therefore, emblematic of an occasion of joy. Here it is used in the twofold sense of an occasion of joy, and of an abundance of provisions for the necessities of those who should be entertained. This feast was to be prepared on Mount Zion—in the provisions which should be made in Jerusalem by the Messiah for the spiritual wants of the whole world. The provisions of that kingdom are often represented under the image of an ample and rich entertainment or supper. See Luke xiv. 16, &c.; Rev. xix. 9; Matt. xxii. 2. ¶ *Of fat things*. Of rich delicacies. Fat things and marrow are often used as synonymous with a sumptuous entertainment, and are made emblematic of the abundant provisions of divine mercy. See Isa. lv. 2; Ps. lxiii. 5, xxxvi. 8, "I shall be satisfied with the fatness of thy house."

¶ *A feast of wines on the lees*. The word which is here used (שְׁמָרִים, *Shemārīm*) is derived from שָׁמַר, *Shāmar*, to keep, preserve, retain, and is applied usually to the *lees* or *dregs* of wine, because they preserve or retain the strength and colour of the wine which is left to stand on them. It is also in this place applied to *wine* which has been kept on the lees, and is therefore synonymous with *old wine*, or wine of

a rich colour and flavour. This fact, that the colour and strength of wine are retained by its being suffered to remain without being poured from one vessel into another is more fully expressed in Jer. xlviii. 11:

Moab hath been at ease from his youth,  
And he hath settled on his lees,  
And hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel,  
Neither hath he gone into captivity;  
Therefore his taste remaineth in him,  
And his scent is not changed.

Comp. Zeph. i. 12. It is well known that wines, unless retained for a considerable time on the lees, lose their flavour and strength, and are much less valuable. ¶ *Of fat things full of marrow*. Marrow is also an emblem of richness, or the delicacy of the entertainment. ¶ *Of wines on the lees well refined*. The word rendered *well refined* (מְרֻקָּם) is usually applied to the purifying of metals in a furnace. Job xxviii. 1; 1 Chron. xxviii. 18, xxix. 4. When applied to wine, it denotes that which had been suffered to remain on the lees until it was entirely refined and purified by fermentation, and had become perfectly clear.

7. And he will destroy. Heb., *He will swallow up*. That is, he will abolish, remove, or take away. ¶ *In this mountain*. In Mount Zion, or in Jerusalem. He would there make provisions for doing it. This would be done in Jerusalem, or on the mountains of which Jerusalem was a part, where the great transactions of the plan of redemption would be accomplished. The use of the word "face" here is one that is common among the Hebrews, where the face of a thing denotes its aspect, or appearance, and then the

8. He will <sup>1</sup> swallow up death in victory; and the LORD God will wipe <sup>k</sup> away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away <sup>1</sup> from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

<sup>i</sup> Hos. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 54.

<sup>k</sup> Rev. 21. 4.

<sup>l</sup> Mal. 3. 17, 18.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

8. He will abolish death for ever;  
And the Lord JEHOVAH will wipe away the tear from every face;  
And the reproach of his people will he take away from off the whole earth:  
For JEHOVAH hath spoken it.

thing itself. Thus "the face of God" is put for God himself; the "face of the earth" for the earth itself; and the "face of the veil" means the veil itself, or the appearance of the veil. To cover the head or the face was a common mode of expressing *grief*. See 2 Sam. xv. 30, xix. 4; Est. vi. 12. And it is probable that the expression here is taken from this custom, as the veil, here over the nations is one that is descriptive of a state of sadness and calamity. The covering, or the veil, here is probably expressive of the ignorance, superstition, crime, and wretchedness that covered the earth.

8. *He will swallow up.* This image is probably taken from a whirlpool or maelstrom in the ocean, that absorbs all that comes near it. It is, therefore, equivalent to, he will destroy, or remove, *ver.* 7. In this place it means that he will abolish death; that is, cause it to cease from its ravages and triumphs. This passage is quoted by Paul in his argument respecting the resurrection of the dead, 1 Cor. xv. 54. He does not, however, quote directly from the Hebrew, or from the LXX, but gives the substance of the passage. His quoting it is sufficient proof, I think, that it refers to the resurrection, and that its primary design is to set forth the achievements of the gospel—achievements that will be fully realized only when death shall cease its dominion, and when its reign shall be for ever at an end. ¶ *Death.* Vitringa supposes that by *death* here is meant the wars and calamities with which the nation had been visited, and which

would cease when the nation should return, and especially under the Messiah. In this interpretation, Rosenmüller concurs. It is possible that the word may have this meaning in some instances; and it is possible that the calamities of the Jews may have suggested this to the prophet, but the primary sense of the word here, I think, is death in its proper signification; and the reference is to the triumphs of God through the Messiah in completely abolishing its reign, and introducing eternal life. And this was designed, doubtless, to comfort the hearts of the Jews by presenting in a single graphic description the gospel as adapted to overcome *all* evils, and even to remove the greatest calamity under which the race groans—DEATH. ¶ *In Victory.* Heb., מִתְּחִלָּה. Paul, in 1 Cor. xv. 54, has translated this, εἰς νίκην, *unto victory*. The word νίκη, *victory*, is often the translation of the word (see 2 Sam. ii. 26; Job xxxvi. 7; Lam. iii. 18; Amos i. 11, vii. 7); though here the LXX have rendered it "strong (or prevailing) death shall be swallowed up." The word may be derived from the Chaldean verb נָצַח, to conquer, surpass; and then may denote *victory*. It often, however, has the sense of *permanency, duration, completeness, eternity*; and may mean *for ever*, and then *entirely or completely*. This sense is not materially different from that of Paul, "unto victory." Death shall be completely, permanently destroyed; that is, a complete *victory* shall be gained over it. The Syriac

9. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited <sup>m</sup> for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

*m* Tit. 2. 13.

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10. For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden <sup>1</sup> down under him, even as straw <sup>2</sup> is trodden down for the dunghill.

<sup>1</sup> threshed.

<sup>2</sup> or, threshed in Madmenah.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

9. And in that day shall they say :

“Lo! This is our God!

“We have waited for him, and he will save us :

“This is JEHOVAH, we have waited for him,

“We will exult, and rejoice in his salvation!”

10. For the hand of JEHOVAH shall rest in this mountain,  
And Moab shall be trodden down in his place,  
As straw is trodden down in the dung-pool.

unites the two ideas of victory and perpetuity. “Death shall be swallowed up in victory for ever.” This will take place under the reign of the Messiah, and shall be completed only in the morning of the resurrection, when the power of death over the people of God shall be completely and forever subdued.

¶ *Will wipe away tears from off all faces.*

This is quoted in Rev. xxi. 4, as applicable to the power of the gospel. The sense is, that JEHOVAH would devise a plan that would be fitted to furnish entire consolation to the afflicted; to comfort the broken-hearted; and that would, in its final triumphs, remove calamity and sorrow from men for ever. The *fulness* of this plan will be seen only in heaven. In anticipation of heaven, however, the gospel now does much to alleviate human woes, and to wipe away tears from the mourner's eyes. This passage is exquisitely beautiful. The poet Burns once said that he could never read it without being affected to tears. It may be added, that nothing but the gospel will do this. No other religion can furnish such consolation; and no other religion is, therefore, adapted to man. ¶ *And the rebuke of his people.* The reproach; the contempt; the opposition to them. This refers to some future period, when the church shall be at peace, and when

pure religion shall everywhere prevail. Hitherto the people of God have been scorned and persecuted; but the time will come when persecution shall cease, and when the true religion shall everywhere prevail, and the church shall have rest, and its triumphs shall spread everywhere on the earth.

9. *And it shall be said in that day.*

By the people of God. This shall be the language of exultation and joy which they shall use. ¶ *Lo, this is our God.* This is the language of those who have been oppressed, and who now see and hail their deliverer. It implies that *such* deliverance, and *such* mercy, could be bestowed only by God, and that the fact that such mercies had been bestowed was proof that he was *their* God. ¶ *We have waited for him.* Amidst many trials, persecutions, and calamities, we have looked for the coming of our God to deliver us, and he has come, and we will rejoice in the salvation that he brings. ¶ *This is the LORD.* This is JEHOVAH. It is JEHOVAH that has brought this deliverance. None but he could do it. The plan of redeeming mercy comes from him; and to him is to be traced all the benefits which it confers on man.

10. *For in this mountain.* In Mount Zion. ¶ *Shall the hand of the LORD rest.* The hand in the Scriptures is

11. And he shall spread forth *his hands* to swim: and he shall his hands in the midst of them, as bring down their pride together he that swimmeth spreadeth forth with the spoils of their hands.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

11. And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of it,  
 As the swimmer spreads forth his hands to swim:  
 And he shall bring down his pride  
 Together with the devices of his hands.

often used as the symbol of protection and defence. By the expression that the hand of JEHOVAH should REST on Mount Zion is meant, probably, that he would be its defender; his protection would not be withdrawn, but would be permanent there, and he would continue to protect and guard it. For an illustration of the phrase, see a similar use of the word *hand* as denoting protection, in Ezra vii. 6, 28; viii. 18, 22, 31; Neh. ii. 8. ¶ *And Moab.* For an account of Moab, see Notes on ch. xv., xvi. Moab here seems to be used in a general sense, to denote the enemies of God; and the declaration that Moab should be trodden down, seems designed to indicate that the foes of God and his people should all be destroyed. ¶ *Under him.* The Chaldee renders this, "in his own place." The phrase has the sense of "in his place," in Ex. xvi. 29; 2 Sam. ii. 23. Here it may mean, that Moab, or the enemies of God, should be trodden down and destroyed in their own land. ¶ *As straw is trodden down for the dunghill.* As straw is suffered to lie in the yard where the cattle lie, to be trodden down by them for the purpose of making manure. The sense is, that Moab should be completely destroyed. Lowth renders this—

As the straw is threshed under the wheels of the car.

The LXX render it in the same way. Lowth supposes that there has been an error in transcribing the Hebrew text, and that the former reading was מרכבה instead of מרכבה. But there is not the slightest evidence from the MSS. that any such mistake has occurred. Nor is it necessary to suppose it. The image

is one that is not of unfrequent occurrence in the Scriptures, to denote the complete and disgraceful prostration of an enemy. See Ps. lxxxiii. 10; 2 Kings ix. 37; Jer. viii. 2; ix. 22; xvi. 4; xxv. 33.

11. *And he shall spread forth, &c.* The sense is, that JEHOVAH would spread desolation through every part of Moab. God would extend his hands everywhere, prostrating his enemies, and the enemies of his people. Lowth, however, applies this to Moab, and supposes that it is designed to represent the action of one who is in danger of sinking, and who stretches out his hands to swim, to sustain himself. And in order to this, he supposes that there should be a slight alteration of a single letter in the Hebrew. His main reason for suggesting this change is, that he cannot conceive how the act of the stretching out of the hands of a swimmer can be any illustration of the action of God in stretching out his hands over Moab to destroy it. It must be admitted that the figure is one that is very unusual. Indeed, it does not anywhere else occur. But it is the obvious meaning of the Hebrew text; it is so understood in the Vulgate, the Chaldee, the Syriac, and the figure is one that is not unintelligible. It is that of a swimmer who extends his hands and arms as far as possible, and who by force removes all that is in his way in passing through the water. So JEHOVAH would extend his hands over all Moab; he would not confine the desolation to any one place, but it should be complete and entire. God should subject all easily to himself, as a swimmer makes his way easily through the waters. ¶ *With the spoils*

12. And the fortress of the high | down, lay low, *and* bring to the  
fort of thy walls shall he bring | ground, *even* to the dust.

NEW TRANSLATION.

12. And the high bulwark of thy walls will he lay low,  
He will humble them, he will bring them to the ground,  
Even to the dust. •

*of their hands.* The word here rendered "spoils," נִצָּח, Lowth renders "the sudden gripe." The Chaldee renders it substantially in the same manner, "with the imposition or laying on of his hands," i. e., with all his might and power. Kimchi also understands it of the gripe of the hands or the arms. The LXX render it, "upon whatsoever he lays his hands," i. e., God shall humble the pride of Moab in respect to everything on which he shall lay his hands. The word properly, and usually, signifies *snares, ambushes, craft*; and here it may mean, *craft, deceit, ambush*; and then, by a natural metonymy, the plunder or spoils which he had obtained by snares and ambushes. It should all perish with Moab, and the land should thus be completely humbled and subdued.

12. *And the fortress, &c.* Thy strong defences shall be destroyed. This is spoken of Moab, (comp. Notes, ch. xv., xvi.,) and is designed to be emblematic of the enemies of the people of God. The repetition of the expressions, "bring down," "lay low," &c., is designed to make the sentence emphatic, and to indicate that it would certainly be accomplished.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ANALYSIS.

For the general scope and design of this chapter, see the remarks at the commencement of chapter xxiv. and ch. xxv. It is a song of praise, supposed by the prophet to be sung by the Jews on their return to their own land, and in the re-establishment of the government of God with the ordinances of worship on Mount Zion. It was

usual, as has been already remarked, (ch. xxv.,) to celebrate any great event with a song of praise, and the prophet supposes that the recovered Jews would thus be disposed to celebrate the goodness of JEHOVAH in again restoring them to their own land, and to the privileges of their own temple-service. There are some indications that this was designed to be sung with a chorus, and with alternate responses, as many of the Psalms were. The ode opens (ver. 1) with a view of Jerusalem as a strong city, in which they might find protection under the guardianship of God. Then (ver. 2) there is a response, or a call that the gates of the strong city should be open to receive the returning nation. This is followed by a declaration of the safety of trusting in JEHOVAH, and a call on all to confide in him, ver. 3—4. The reason of this is stated in ver. 5—7, that JEHOVAH humbled the proud and the wicked, and guarded the ways of the just. The feelings of the Jews—their trust in Jehovah is next presented, (ver. 8, 9;) and this is followed by a declaration, (ver. 10, 11,) that the wicked would not recognise the hand of God; and by an assertion that all their deliverance (ver. 12) had been wrought by God. This is succeeded by an acknowledgment that they had submitted to other Lords than JEHOVAH; but that now they would submit to him alone, (verses 13, 14.) The declaration succeeds that God had enlarged their nation, (ver. 15;) and this is succeeded by a description of their calamities, and their abortive efforts to save themselves, (ver. 16—18.) Many had died in their captivity, yet there is now the assurance (ver. 19) that they should live again; and there is a general call on the people of God

## CHAPTER XXVI.

1. In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong <sup>a</sup> city; salvation will God appoint for walls <sup>b</sup> and bulwarks.

2. Open <sup>c</sup> ye the gates, that the

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 31. 21. <sup>b</sup> ch. 60. 18.  
<sup>c</sup> Ps. 118. 19.

righteous nation which keepeth the <sup>1</sup> truth may enter in.

3. Thou wilt keep *him* <sup>2</sup> in perfect peace, <sup>d</sup> whose <sup>3</sup> mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

<sup>1</sup> truths. <sup>2</sup> peace, peace. <sup>d</sup> Phil. 4. 7.  
<sup>3</sup> or, thought, or, imagination.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

1. In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah :  
"We have a strong city :  
"Salvation shall God appoint for walls and bulwarks.
2. "Open ye the gates,  
"And let the righteous nation enter ;  
"[The nation] that keepeth truth.
3. "Him that is stayed on thee  
"Thou wilt keep in perfect peace ;  
"For he trusteth in thee.

(ver. 20) to enter into their chambers and hide themselves there until the indignation should be overpast, with the assurance (ver. 21) that JEHOVAH would come forth to punish the oppressors for their iniquity. With this assurance the poem closes.

1. *In that day.* In their restoration to their own land. ¶ *Shall this song be sung.* By the recovered and restored people of God. ¶ *We have a strong city.* Jerusalem. This does not mean that it was then strongly fortified or defended; but that God would guard it, and that thus it would be strong. Jerusalem was easily capable of being strongly fortified, (Ps. xxv. 2;) but the idea here is, that JEHOVAH would be a protector, and that this would constitute its strength. ¶ *Salvation will God appoint for walls.* That is, he will himself be the defender of his people in the place of walls and bulwarks. We shall need no other walls and bulwarks than his protection. A similar expression occurs in ch. lx. 18. See also Jer. iii. 23; and Zech. ii. 5. ¶ *Bulwarks.* This word means, properly, bastions, or ramparts. The original means, properly, a *pomærium*, or antemural defence; a space without the

wall of a city probably raised up like a small wall. The Syriac renders it, "*Son of a wall*," *Bar shuro*, meaning a small wall. It was usually a hill, or heap of earth thrown up around the city, that constituted an additional defence, so that if they were driven from that, they could retreat within the walls.

2. *Open ye the gates.* This is probably the language of a chorus responding to the sentiment in ver. 1. The captive people are returning; the city before them is represented as sufficient to protect them; and this cry is made that the gates may be thrown open, and that they may be permitted to enter without obstruction. Comp. Ps. cxviii. 19, xxiv. 7, 9. ¶ *That the righteous nation.* The returning people of God. ¶ *Which keepeth the truth.* Who during their long captivity and intercourse with heathen nations, have not apostatized from the true religion, but have adhered firmly to the worship of the true God.

3. *Thou wilt keep him, &c.* The following verses to ver. 11 contain moral and religious reflections, and seem designed to indicate the peace and resignation evinced by the "righteous nation" during their long afflictions. Their own feelings they are here re-

4. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: <sup>f</sup> for in the LORD JEHO-

<sup>e</sup> Ps. 62. 8.

<sup>f</sup> Ps. 135. 1.

VAH is <sup>1</sup> everlasting strength.

<sup>1</sup> the rock of ages.

NEW TRANSLATION.

4. "Trust ye in JEHOVAH for ever,  
"For in the LORD JEHOVAH there is an everlasting refuge.

presented as uttering in the form of *general truths*, to be sources of consolation to others. ¶ *In perfect peace.* Heb., as in the margin, "*peace, peace*;" the repetition of the word denoting, as is usual in Hebrew, emphasis, and here evidently meaning, undisturbed, perfect peace. That is, the mind that has confidence in God shall not be agitated by the trials to which it shall be subject; by persecution, poverty, sickness, want, or bereavement. The inhabitants of Judea had been oppressed and borne to a long captivity in a far distant land. They had been subjected to reproaches and to scorn, (Ps. exxxvii.) had been stripped of their property and honour; and had been reduced to the condition of prisoners and captives. Yet, the confidence of the pious in God had not been shaken. They still trusted in him; still believed that he could and would deliver him. Their mind was, therefore, kept in entire peace. So it was with the Redeemer when he was persecuted and maligned. 1 Pet. ii. 23; Comp. Luke xxiii. 46. And so it has been with thousands, and tens of thousands of the confessors and martyrs, and of the persecuted and afflicted people of God, who have been enabled to commit their cause to Him, and amidst the storms of persecution, and even in the prison and at the stake, have been kept in perfect peace. ¶ *Whose mind is stayed on thee.* Various interpretations have been given of this passage, but our translation has probably hit upon the exact sense. The word which is rendered "*mind*," *מַחְשָׁבָה*, is derived from *מָצַר*, *yûzâr*, to form, create, devise; and it properly denotes that which is formed, or made. Isa. xxix. 16; Hab. ii. 18; Ps. ciii. 14. Then it denotes anything that is formed by the

mind, its thoughts, imaginations, devices. Gen. viii. 21; Deut. xxxi. 21. Here it may mean the *thoughts* themselves, or the mind that forms the thoughts; the mind itself. Either interpretation suits the connexion, and will make sense. The expression, "*is stayed on thee*," in the Hebrew, does not express the idea that the mind is stayed on God, though that is evidently implied. The Hebrew is simply, whose mind is *stayed, supported*, *מְסֻכָּה*, that is, evidently supported by God; or that rests on God. There is no other support but that; and the connexion requires us to understand this of Him.

4. *Trust ye in the LORD for ever.* The sense is, Let your confidence in God on no occasion fail. Let no calamity, no adversity, no persecution, no poverty, no trial of any kind, prevent your reposing entire confidence in him. This is spoken evidently in view of the fact stated in the previous verse, that the mind that is stayed on him *shall have perfect peace.* ¶ *For in the LORD JEHOVAH.* This is one of the *four* places where our translators have retained the original word JEHOVAH. Comp. Ex. vi. 3; Ps. lxxxiii. 18. Notes on Isa. xii. 2. The original is *יְהוָה יְהוָה*, Be JAH, JEHOVAH; the first word, *יְהוָה*, JAH, (comp. Ps. lxxviii. 4,) being merely an abridged form of JEHOVAH. The same form occurs in ch. xii. 2. See the Note on that place. The union of these two forms seems designed to express, in the highest sense possible, the majesty, the glory, and the holiness of God; to excite the highest possible reverence where language fails of completely conveying the idea. ¶ *Is everlasting strength.* Heb., as in the margin, "*the rock of ages*;" a more

5. For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.

6. The foot <sup>g</sup> shall tread it

<sup>g</sup> Mal. 4. 3.

down, *even* the feet of the poor, *and* the steps of the needy.

7. The way <sup>h</sup> of the just is uprightness: <sup>i</sup> thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

<sup>h</sup> Eph. 2. 10.

<sup>i</sup> Ps. 37. 23.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

5. "For he bringeth down them that dwell on high;

"The lofty city he layeth it low;

"He hath brought it down to the ground;

"He hath levelled it to the dust.

6. "The foot shall trample upon it;

"The feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.—

7. "The way of the just is upright:

"Thou most upright dost make exactly level the path of the just.

poetic and beautiful expression than in our translation. The idea is, that God is firm and unchangeable, like an eternal rock; and that in him we may find protection and defence that shall be immovable. See Deut. xxxii. 4, 15, 18, 30, 31; 1 Sam. ii. 2; Ps. xviii. 31; 2 Sam. xxii. 32, 47, xxiii. 3, Ps. xix. 14, xxviii. 1, xlii. 9, lxii. 2, 6, 7, &c., where God is called a rock.

5. *The lofty city, he layeth it low.* The proud city of Babylon. See Note, ch. xxv. 12. Comp. Notes on ch. xiii., xiv.

6. *The foot shall tread it down.* It shall be completely humbled and trodden down. ¶ *The feet of the poor, &c.* That is, evidently, those who had been despised by them, and who had been overcome and oppressed by them. The obvious reference here is to the Jews who had been captives there. The idea is not necessarily that the "poor" referred to here would be among the conquerors, but that *when* the Babylonians should be overcome and their city destroyed, those who were then oppressed should be in circumstances of comparative prosperity. No doubt the Jews who in subsequent times travelled to the site of Babylon for purposes of traffic, would trample indignantly on the remains of the city where their fathers were captives for seventy years, and would exult in the idea that their own

once down-trodden city, Jerusalem, was in a condition of comparative triumph and prosperity. That there were many Jews in Babylon subsequently to this time, and after Babylon began to decline from its haughtiness and grandeur, we learn expressly from both Philo and Josephus. Thus Philo (In Libro de Legatione ad Cajum, p. 792) says, "That it is known that Babylon and many other satraps were possessed by the Jews, not only by rumor, but by experience." So Josephus (Ant. B. xv. c. ii.) says, that there were in the time of Hyrcanus many Jews at Babylon.

7. *The way of the just is uprightness.* The Hebrew is literally, "The way to the just is uprightness;" and the word "way" probably refers to God's way, or his dealings with the righteous. The sentiment is, that his dealings with them are just and holy; that though they are afflicted and oppressed, yet that his ways are right, and that they will yet perceive it. This is language supposed to be used by the captive Jews after their return to their own land; after they had seen the proud city of Babylon taken; and after God had come forth to vindicate and defend them. The word "uprightness" in the original is in the plural number, but is often used in the sense of *straightness*



8. Yea, in the way of thy <sup>k</sup> judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire <sup>l</sup> of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

9. With my soul have I desired

<sup>k</sup> c. 64. 5.

<sup>l</sup> Ps. 63. 1, 6.

thee in the night; <sup>m</sup> yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when <sup>n</sup> thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

<sup>m</sup> Can. 2. 1.

<sup>n</sup> Ps. 58. 11.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

8. "Yea, in the way of thy laws, O JEHOVAH, have we waited for thee;  
 "The desire of the soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.  
 9. "With my soul have I longed for thee in the night;  
 "Yea, with my inmost spirit have I sought thee in the morn;  
 "For when thy judgments are in the earth,  
 "The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

(Prov. xxiii. 31; Cant. vii. 9); of sincerity, or uprightness (Cant. i. 4); or of righteousness as a judge, Ps. xcix. 4, ix. 9, lviii. 2. ¶ *Thou, most upright.* Evidently an address to God, as being most just, and as having now evinced his uprightness in all the trials and deliverances of his people. The same epithet is applied to Him in Deut. xxxii. 4; Ps. xxv. 8, xcii. 16. ¶ *Dost weigh the path of the just.* The word here used, <sup>בָּאָזָן</sup>, may mean, to weigh as in scales or a balance (Ps. lviii. 3); but it may also mean, and does usually, to make straight or smooth; to beat a path; to make level. Ps. lxxviii. 50; Prov. iv. 26, v. 21. Here it probably means, that God had made the way smooth, or exactly level. He had removed all obstacles, and had conducted his people in a plain and levelled way.

8. Yea. Truly. This is an additional consideration, showing the state of the pious during their long and severe trials. ¶ *In the way of thy judgments.* The word *judgments* often refers to the statutes, or laws of God. But it may also refer to the afflictions and trials with which he visits or judges men; the punishments which they endure for their sins. In which sense the word is used here it is not easy to determine. Lowth understands it of the "laws" of JEHOVAH. So Kimchi, who says that the sense is, that during their captivity and trials, they had not re-

mitted anything of their love and piety towards God. I am inclined to the belief that this is the true interpretation, because in the corresponding member of the parallelism they are represented as saying that the desire of their soul was to God, and to the remembrance of him, implying that they sought by an observance of his laws to please him, and to secure his favor. ¶ *The desire of our soul is to thy name.* The word "name" is here used, as it is often, to denote God himself. They desired that he would come and deliver them; they earnestly wished that he would manifest himself to them as their friend. ¶ *And to the remembrance of thee.* The word "remembrance" <sup>זִכְרוֹן</sup>, is often equivalent to *name, appellation*, or that by which any one is remembered, or known. Thus Ex. iii. 15:

This is my name for ever;

And this is my memorial (<sup>זִכְרוֹן</sup>) unto all generations.

So Ps. xxx. 4:

Sing unto JEHOVAH, O ye saints of his;

And give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness;

that is, at his holy memorial (Margin), or name. In the place before us it seems to be used in the sense of *name, or appellation*; that is, that by which God would be remembered or known.

9. *With my soul.* It has been the object of my earnest desire or wish. ¶ *In the night.* By desiring God in the

10. Let ° favor be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in <sup>P</sup> the land of

o Ec. 8. 11. Rev. 2. 21.

p Ec. 3. 16.

uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty ° of the LORD.

g c2. 2. 10.

NEW TRANSLATION.

10. "Though mercy be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness;

"In the very land of rectitude will he deal unjustly,

"And will not behold the majesty of JEHOVAH.

night, and by seeking him early, is meant that the desire to seek him was unremitted and constant. The prophet speaks of the pious Jews who were in captivity in Babylon; and says that it was the object of their unremitted anxiety to please God, and to do his will. ¶ *For when thy judgments are in the earth.* This is given as a reason for what had just been said, that in their calamity they had sought God without ceasing. The reason is, that the punishments which he inflicted were intended to lead men to learn righteousness. The sentiment is expressed in a general form, though there is no doubt that the immediate reference is to the calamities which the Jews had suffered in their removal to Babylon as a punishment for their sins. ¶ *Learn righteousness.* The design is, to warn, to restrain, and to reform them. The immediate reference here was undoubtedly to the Jews, on whom this effect was seen in a remarkable manner in their captivity at Babylon. But it is also true of other nations; and though the effect of calamity is not always to turn a people to God, or to make them permanently righteous, yet it restrains and admonishes them, and leads them at least to an external reformation. It is also true in regard to nations as well as individuals, that they make a more decided advance in virtue and piety in days of affliction than in the time of great external prosperity. Comp. Deut. vi. 11, 12.

10. *Let favor be shewed to the wicked.* This is designed as an illustration of the sentiment in the previous verse—

that judgments were needful in order that wicked men might be brought to the ways of righteousness. The truth is general, that though wicked men are favored with success in their enterprises, with wealth and with honors, yet the effect will not be to lead them to God and to the ways of virtue and religion. How often is this illustrated in the conduct of wicked men? How often do they show when rolling in wealth, or when surrounded with the comforts of the domestic circle, that they feel no need of the aid and friendship of God, and that their heart has no response of gratitude to make for all his mercies. Hence the necessity, according to the language of the song before us, that God should take away their property, remove their friends, or destroy their health, in order that they may be brought to honor him. To do this, is benevolence in God; for whatever is needful to make the sinner a better man, and to bring him to the love of God and to the ways of virtue, is kindness to his soul. ¶ *In the land of uprightness.* Even when others are just and pious around him; when this is so much the general trait that it may be called "*the land of integrity,*" yet he will pursue his way of iniquity though it may be solitary. Such is his love of sin, that neither the favor of God, nor the general piety around him; the mercy of his Maker, nor the influence of holy examples, will lead him in the way of piety and truth. ¶ *Will not behold the majesty of the LORD.* As illustrated in the mercies which he bestows on the sinner.

11. LORD, *when thy hand is lifted up*, they <sup>r</sup> will not see: *but* they shall <sup>s</sup> see, and be ashamed for their envy <sup>t</sup> at the people; yea, the fire <sup>r</sup> of thine enemies shall devour them.

12. LORD, thou wilt ordain

<sup>r</sup> Jer. 5. 3.  
or, toward thy.

<sup>s</sup> Rev. 1. 7.  
<sup>t</sup> Dan. 3. 22, 25.

peace <sup>u</sup> for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works <sup>1</sup> in us.

13. O LORD our God, *other* <sup>x</sup> lords beside thee have had dominion over us: *but* <sup>y</sup> by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

<sup>u</sup> ver. 3. <sup>1</sup> or, for.  
<sup>x</sup> 2 Chron. 23. 5, 6. Rom. 6. 16—18.  
<sup>y</sup> Ps. 71. 15, 16.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

11. "O JEHOVAH, thy hand is lifted up, but they will not see:  
"But they shall see thy zeal for thy people;  
"Yea, the fire shall consume thine adversaries.
12. "JEHOVAH, thou wilt ordain for us peace;  
"For thou hast wrought all our works for us.
13. "O JEHOVAH our God!  
"Other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us;  
"Thee only, thy name will we henceforth celebrate.

11. LORD, *when thy hand is lifted up*. This is an explanation of the sentiment expressed in the former verse. The lifting up of the hand here refers doubtless to the manifestation of the character and majesty and goodness of the Lord. ¶ *They will not see*. They are blind to all the exhibitions of thy power and mercy and goodness. ¶ *But they shall see*. They shall yet be brought to recognise thy hand. They shall see thy favor towards thy children, and thy judgment on thy foes. The divine dealings shall be such that they shall be constrained to recognise him, and to acknowledge his existence and perfections. ¶ *And be ashamed*. Be confounded, because they did not sooner recognise the divine goodness towards the people of God, and his vengeance towards his foes. ¶ *For their envy at the people*. The word "their" is not in the Hebrew, and the sense is, that they shall see the zeal of JEHOVAH in behalf of his people; and shall be ashamed that they did not sooner recognise his hand. The word rendered *envy*, *נָאָץ*, may mean envy (Eccl. iv. 4, ix. 6), but it more properly and frequently means *zeal, ardor*, &c. 2 Kings

x. 16; Isa. ix. 7. ¶ *Yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them*. Or, rather, "Yea, the fire in regard to thy enemies shall devour them." The sense is, that when his people should be delivered, his foes would be destroyed; his zeal for his people would also be connected with indignation against his foes, which would destroy them. The deliverance of his people from Babylon and the commencement of the downfall of that city were simultaneous, and the cause was the same.

12. *Thou wilt ordain peace*. The word *peace* here seems to stand opposed to all the evils of various kinds which they had experienced in the captivity at Babylon; and to refer not only to peace, but also to prosperity, and to the continued divine favor. ¶ *For thou also hast wrought all our works in us*. Or rather, *for us*, *לָנוּ*. It is owing to thy hand, and thy merciful interposition, that we are saved.

13. *Other lords beside thee, &c.* The allusion here is to the kings of Babylon who had subdued and oppressed them, and who in their long captivity had held them in subjection to their laws. ¶ *But by thee only, &c.* This may be

14. *They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.*

15. Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

14. "They are dead, they shall not live;  
 "They are shades, they shall not rise;—  
 "Because thou hast visited and destroyed them,  
 "And hast made all their memory to perish.  
 15. "Thou hast enlarged the nation, O JEHOVAH;  
 "Thou hast enlarged the nation; thou art glorified:  
 "Thou hast widely extended all the borders of the land.

better rendered, "*but only thee, thy name will we henceforward commemorate.*" The words, "by thee," and "thy name," are put in apposition, and denote the same thing. The word, "make mention," נִזְכֵּר, means, literally, to cause to be remembered; to commemorate; then, to celebrate. The idea is, that during their long captivity, they had been subject to the dominion of other lords than JEHOVAH; but now that they were restored to their own land, they would acknowledge only JEHOVAH as their Lord, and would henceforward celebrate only his name.

14. *They are dead.* That is, the kings and tyrants to whom reference is made in ver. 13. The principal enemies of the Jews who had oppressed them would be slain in the taking of Babylon by Cyrus. See Notes, ch. xiii., xiv. ¶ *They shall not live.* They shall not again live, and be permitted to harass and enslave us. ¶ *They are deceased.* Heb., נְשָׁמַיִם—a name given to the *shades* or *manes* of the dead, from an idea that they were weak and powerless. Comp. Notes, ch. xiv. 9, 10. Comp. Ps. lxxxviii. 11; Prov. ii. 18, ix. 18, xxi. 16. The sense here is, that they had died and gone to the land of shades, and were now weak, and unable any more to reach or injure the people of God. ¶ *Therefore.* Or rather, *for*; the word

נִזְכֵּר being used evidently in the sense of *because that*, as in Gen. xxxviii. 26; Ps. xlii. 7, xlv. 3; Num. xiii. 31, xiv. 13. The declaration that follows is given as the reason why they were dead, and incapable of again injuring or annoying them. ¶ *Thou hast visited, &c.* See Note, ch. xxiv. 22. The word *visit* here is used in the sense of *to punish*. ¶ *And made all their memory to perish.* Hast blotted out their name; hast caused their celebrity to cease.

15. *Thou hast increased the nation.* That is, the Jewish nation. Note, ch. ix. 3. The nation was not only enlarged by its regular increase of population, but many converts attended them on their return from Babylon, and probably many came in from surrounding nations on their return, and on the rebuilding of their capital. ¶ *Thou hadst removed it far, &c.* Or, rather, thou hast extended far all the borders of the land. The word rendered "removed," פָּרַח, means, usually, to put far away; and here it may mean, to put far away the borders or boundaries of the nation; that is, to extend them far. The word "*unto*" is not in the original; and the phrase rendered "ends of the earth," may mean, the borders or boundaries of the land. The parallelism requires this construction, and it is indeed the obvious one, and has been adopted by Lowth and Noyes.

16. LORD, in trouble \* have they visited thee, they poured out a <sup>1</sup> prayer when thy chastening was upon them.

17. Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and

\* Hos. 5. 15.

<sup>1</sup> secret speech.

crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD.

18. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

16. "O JEHOVAH, in trouble have they sought thee;  
"When thy chastening was upon them they poured out a humble supplication.
17. "As a woman with child when her delivery approaches  
"Is in pangs, and cries aloud in her anguish,  
"Thus have we been before thee, O JEHOVAH.
18. "We have conceived; we have been in anguish;  
"We have, as it were, brought forth wind;  
"Deliverance we have not wrought in the earth,  
"And the inhabitants of the world have not fallen.

16. *Poured out a prayer.* Margin, *secret speech.* The Hebrew word, שָׁפַח, means, properly, a whispering, muttering; and then a sighing, a calling for help. This is the sense here. In their calamity they sighed, and called on God for help. They went before him, and breathed forth in gentle sighs their desires.

17. *Like as a woman with child, &c.* This verse is designed to state their griefs and sorrows during the time of their oppression in Babylon. The comparison here used is one that is very frequent in the sacred writings to represent any great suffering. See Ps. xlviii. 6; Jer. vi. 24; xiii. 21; xxii. 23; xlix. 24; l. 43; Micah iv. 9, 10.

18. *We have been, &c.* This refers to sorrows and calamities which they had experienced in former times, when they had made great efforts for deliverance, and those efforts had proved abortive. I think it refers to the efforts of this kind which they had made during their painful captivity of seventy years. There is no direct proof, indeed, that during that time they attempted to revolt; or that they organized themselves for resistance to the Babylonish

power; but there can be no doubt that they earnestly sought deliverance; that their condition was one of extreme pain and anguish—a condition that is strikingly represented here by the pains of childbirth. Nay, it is not improbable that during that long period there may have been abortive efforts made at deliverance, and that here they refer to those efforts as having accomplished nothing. ¶ *We have as it were brought forth wind.* Our efforts have been abortive; they have availed and produced nothing. Michaelis, as quoted by Lowth, explains this figure in the following manner, "Rariorem morbum describi, empneumatosin, aut ventosam molam dictum; quo quæ laborant diu et sibi, et peritis medicis gravidæ videntur, tandemque post omnes veræ gravitatis molestias et labores ventum ex utero emittant; quem morbum passim describunt medici." Syntagma Comment. 11. p. 165. Grotius thinks that the reference is to birds quæ edunt ova subventanea; and refers to Pliny, x. 58. But the correct reference is doubtless that which is mentioned by Michaelis, and which may be seen fully described in the books on obstetrics. ¶ *Neither*

19. Thy dead *men* shall live, | that dwell in dust: for thy dew is  
together with my dead body shall | as the dew of herbs, and the earth  
they arise. Awake and sing, ye " | shall cast out the dead.

a Dan. 12. 2.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

19. "Thy dead shall live again;  
"The dead bodies of my [people] shall arise.  
"Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust!  
"For thy dew is as the dew upon herbs,  
"And the earth shall cast forth her dead.

have the inhabitants of the world fullen. Neither were the people who had dominion over us overthrown. We had no power to subdue them; and notwithstanding all our exertions, their dominion was unbroken. This refers to the Babylonians, who had dominion over the captive Jews.

19. *Thy dead men shall live.* Very various interpretations have been given of this verse, which may be seen at length by comparing Vitranga, Rosenmüller, Gesenius, and Poole's Synopsis. It is not the purpose of these Notes to enter into an examination of these opinions. In ver. 14, the chorus is represented as saying of the dead men and tyrants of Babylon that had oppressed the captive Jews, that they should not rise, and should no more oppress the people of God. In contradistinction from this fate of their enemies, the choir is here introduced as addressing JEHOVAH (comp. ver. 16), and saying, "THY dead shall live;" that is, thy people shall live again; shall be restored to vigour, and strength, and enjoyment. They are now dead; that is, they are, as I understand it, *civilly* dead in Babylon; they are cut off from their privileges, torn away from their homes, made captive in a foreign land. Their king has been dethroned; their temple demolished; their princes, priests, and people made captive; their name blotted from the list of nations; and to all intents and purposes, as a people they are *deceased*. This figure is one that is common, by which the loss of privileges and enjoyments, and especially of civil rights, is represented as

death. So we speak now of a man's being dead in law; dead to enjoyment; dead to his country; spiritually dead; dead in sins. I do not understand this, therefore, as referring primarily to the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; but to the captives in Babylon who were civilly dead and cut off by their oppressors from their rights and enjoyments as a nation. ¶ *Shall live.* Shall be restored to their country, and be reinstated in all their rights and immunities as a people among the nations of the earth. This restoration shall be as striking as would be the resurrection of the dead from their graves. Though, therefore, this does not refer primarily to the resurrection of the dead, yet the illustration is drawn from that doctrine, and implies that that doctrine was one with which they were familiar. An image which is employed for the sake of illustration must be one that is familiar to the mind, and the reference here to this doctrine as an *illustration* is a demonstration that the doctrine of the resurrection was well known. ¶ *Together with my dead body shall they arise* The words "together with" are not in the original. The words rendered "my dead body," מִיָּדִי, literally means "my dead body," and may be applied to a man, or to a beast. Lev. v. 2; vii. 24. It is also applied to the dead in general; to the deceased; to carcases, or dead bodies. See Ps. lxxix. 2; Jer. vii. 33; ix. 22; xvi. 18; xxvi. 23; Lev. xi. 11; Jer. xxxiv. 20. It may, therefore, be rendered, *my deceased, my dead*; and will thus be parallel with the phrase, "thy dead men," and is used in the same

20. Come, my people, enter as it were for a little moment, thou into thy chambers, and shut until the indignation be overpast thy doors about thee: hide thyself!

## NEW TRANSLATION.

20. "Come, O my people, enter thou into thy chambers,  
 "And shut thy doors after thee;  
 "Hide thyself for a little moment,  
 "Until the indignation be overpast.

sense with reference to the same species of resurrection. It is not the language of the prophet Isaiah as if he referred to his own body when it should be dead, but it is the language of the choir that sings, and that speaks in the name of the Jewish people. *That people* is thus introduced as saying *my dead*, that is, *our dead* shall rise. Not only in the address to JEHOVAH is this sentiment uttered when it is said, "*thy dead shall rise*;" but when the attention is turned to themselves as a people, they say, "*our dead shall rise*;" those that appertain to our nation shall rise from the dust, and be restored to their own privileges and land. ¶ *Awake and sing*. In view of the cheering and consolatory fact just stated, that the dead shall rise, the chorus calls on the people to awake and rejoice. This is an address made directly to the dejected and oppressed people as if the choir were with them. ¶ *Ye that dwell in dust*. To sit in dust, or to dwell in the dust, is emblematic of a state of dejection, want, oppression, or poverty. Isa. xlvii. 1; Ps. xlv. 25, cxix. 25; Isa. xxv. 12, xxvi. 5. Here it is supposed to be addressed to the captives in Babylon, as oppressed, enslaved, dejected. The language is derived from the doctrine of the resurrection of the body—and proves that that doctrine was understood and believed:—the sense is, that those who were thus dejected and humbled should be restored to their former elevated privileges. ¶ *For thy dew*. This is evidently an address to JEHOVAH. His dew is that which he sends down from heaven, and which is under his direction and control. Dew is the emblem of that which refreshes and vivifies. In countries where it rains but seldom, as it does in

the East, the copious dews at night supply in some sense the want of rain. Thence *dew* is used in Scripture as an emblem of the graces and influences of the Spirit of God, by which his people are visited, and by which they are cheered and comforted, as the parched earth and the withered herbs are refreshed by the gentle falling, and copious dews at night. Thus in Hos. xiv. 5:

I will be as the dew unto Israel;  
 He shall grow as the lily,  
 And cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

The prophet here speaks of the captivity in Babylon. Their state is represented as a state of death—illustrated by the parched earth, and the decayed and withered herbs. But his grace and favour would visit them, and they would be revived. ¶ *As the dew of herbs*. As the dew that falls on herbs. This phrase has, however, been rendered very variously. The Vulgate renders it, "*thy dew is as the dew of light*." The LXX, "*thy dew shall be healing, ἰαμα, unto them*." The Chaldee, "*thy dew shall be the dew of light*." But the most correct and consistent translation is undoubtedly that which renders the word *herbs*, or vegetables. Comp. 2 Kings iv. 39. ¶ *And the earth shall cast out the dead*. This is language which is derived from the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; and shows also that that doctrine was understood by the Hebrews in the time of Isaiah. The sense is, that as the earth shall cast forth its dead in the resurrection, so the people of God in Babylon should be restored to life, and to their former privileges in their own land.

20. *Come, my people*. This is an Epilogue, (Rosenmüller,) in which the

21. For, behold, the LORD cometh<sup>b</sup> out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her<sup>1</sup> blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

<sup>b</sup> Jude 14, 15.

<sup>1</sup> bloods.

NEW TRANSLATION.

21. "For lo! JEHOVAH cometh forth from his place,  
 "To punish the inhabitant of the earth for his iniquity."  
 "And the earth shall disclose her dead,  
 "And shall no more cover her slain."

choir addresses the people, and entreats them to be quiet and tranquil during that convulsion and agitation of things by which their oppressors should be punished, and the way made for their deliverance. The image is taken from seeking a shelter when a storm rages, until its fury is spent. The address is to the captive Jews in Babylon. The tempest that would rage would be the wars and commotions by which Babylon was to be overthrown. While that storm raged, they were exhorted to be calm, serene, and tranquil. ¶ *Enter thou into thy chambers.* Into places of retirement, where the storm of indignation on your enemies shall not reach or affect you. ¶ *Hide thyself as it were, &c.* Do not expose yourselves to the storms of war. Be calm and quiet; and do not mingle in the scenes of battle, lest you should partake of the general calamity. ¶ *For a little moment.* Implying that the war would not rage long. Babylon was taken in a single night, (see Notes on ch. xiii., xiv.,) and the call here is for the people of God to be calm and quiet while this battle should rage in which the city should be taken. ¶ *Until the indignation, &c.* Not as Lowth supposes, the indignation of God against his people, but the storm of his indignation against their enemies, the Babylonians. That would be soon "overpast," the city would be taken, the storms of war would cease to rage, and then they would be delivered, and might safely return to their own land.

21. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place. That is, from heaven, which is the dwelling-place, or residence of God. Micah i. 3; Ps. cxv. 3; Eze.

iii. 12. When God executes vengeance, he is represented as coming from his abode, his dwelling-place, his capitol—as a monarch goes forth to war to destroy his foes. ¶ *To punish the inhabitants of the earth.* The land of Chaldea, or of Babylon. ¶ *The earth also shall disclose her blood.* Blood, in the Scriptures, often denotes guilt. The sense here is, that the land of Chaldea should reveal its guilt; that is, the punishment which God would inflict would be a revelation to all of the crimes of the nation. There is a resemblance here to the language which was used respecting the blood of Abel, Gen. iv. 10: "The voice of thy brother's blood (Heb., as here, bloods) crieth unto me from the ground." ¶ *And shall no more cover her slain.* Shall no more be able to conceal its guilt in slaying the people of God. By these hopes, the Jews were to be comforted in their calamity; and, no doubt, this song was penned by Isaiah long before that captivity, in order that in the midst of their protracted and severe trials, they might be consoled with the hope of deliverance, and might know what to do when the storms of war should rage around Babylon, the place of their captivity, and when the proud city was to fall. They were not to mingle in the strife; were to take no part with either their foes or their deliverers; but were to be calm, gentle, peaceful, and to remember that all this was to effect their deliverance. Comp. Ex. xiv. 13, 14, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of JEHOVAH; JEHOVAH shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." There are



## CHAPTER XXVII.

1. In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan <sup>2</sup> the

a Ps. 74. 14.

<sup>1</sup> piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

<sup>1</sup> or crossing like a bar.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

1. In that day shall JEHOVAH punish with his sword,  
His well-tempered, and great, and strong sword;  
Leviathan, that fleet serpent,  
Even Leviathan the winding serpent;  
Yea, he will slay the monster that is in the sea

times when the children of God should be calm, and quiet, and look calmly on the conflicts of the men of this world. They should mingle with neither party; for they should remember that JEHOVAH presides over these agitations, and that their ultimate end is to bring deliverance to his church, and to advance the interests of his kingdom on the earth. Then they should be calm, gentle, prayerful, and should look up to God to make all these agitations and strifes the means of advancing the interests of his kingdom.

## CHAPTER XXVII

## ANALYSIS.

For the general purport and design of this chapter, see the analysis of ch. xxiv. A great many different expositions have been given of the design of this chapter. Indeed, almost every commentator has had his own peculiar theory, and has differed from almost every other. Some of the different views which have been taken may be seen in the Notes on ver. 1, and may be examined at length in Vitranga. I regard the most simple and obvious interpretation as the correct one; and that is, that it is a continuation of the vision commenced in ch. xxiv., and referring to the same great event—the captivity at Babylon, and the deliverance from that captivity. This subject has been pursued through the 24th, the 25th, and the 26th chapters. In the 25th and the 26th chapters, the main design was to show the joy which would

be evinced on their rescue from that land—a joy that would be celebrated by songs of praise. The main purpose of this is, to show the effect of that captivity and deliverance in purifying the Jews themselves, and in overcoming their propensity to idolatry, on account of which that captivity had been suffered to take place. The design of the chapter is, like that of many others in Isaiah, to comfort the people when they should be oppressed during their long and painful exile. The general plan of the chapter is, (1.) a statement that their great enemy, the Leviathan (see Note on ver. 1), should be destroyed (ver. 1); and (2.) a song, in alternate responses, respecting the people of God, under the image of a vineyard yielding rich wines (vs. 2—13). In this song, JEHOVAH's protection over the vineyard is shown (ver. 3); he declares that he is not actuated by fury (ver. 4); his people are exhorted to trust in him (ver. 5); a full promise that the Jews shall yet flourish is given (ver. 6); JEHOVAH says that his judgments are mild on them (ver. 7, 8), and that the design is to purify his people (ver. 9); for their sins they should be punished (ver. 10, 11); yet they should be completely recovered, and should be restored to their own land, and worship him in the holy mount at Jerusalem, v. 12, 13.

1. *In that day.* In that future time when the Jews would be captive in Babylon; and when they would sigh for deliverance. See Note, ch. xxvi. 1. This verse might have been connected

with the previous chapter as it refers to the same event, and then this chapter would have commenced with the poem or song which begins in ver. 2. ¶ *With his sore.* קָשָׁה—*hard*. Septuagint, *σὺν ἀγίᾳ*—*holy*. The Hebrew means, a sword whose edge is hard; a sword that is well-tempered, and trusty. ¶ *And great and strong sword.* The sword is an emblem of war; and is often used among the Hebrews to denote war. See Lev. xxvi. 25; Gen. xxvii. 40. It is also an emblem of justice or punishment, as punishment was often inflicted by the sword. Deut. xxxii. 41, 42; Ps. vii. 12; Heb. xi. 37. Here, if it refers, as I suppose it does, to the overthrow of Babylon and its tyrannical king, it means that God would punish them by the armies of the Medes, employed as his sword, or instrument. Thus in Ps. xvii. 13, David prays, "Deliver my soul from the wicked which is thy sword." Comp. Notes, Isa. x. 5, 6. ¶ *Leviathan,* לִוְיָתָן. The LXX render this, τὸν δράκοντα. *The Dragon.* The word *Leviathan* is probably derived from לָוָה, in Arabic, *to weave, to twist* (*Gesenius*); and literally means, the twisted animal. The word occurs in six places in the Old Testament, and is translated (Job iii. 8), "their mourning," Marg., *Leviathan*; Job xli. 1, *leviathan*—in which chapter is an extended description of the animal; Ps. lxxiv. 14, where it is rendered *leviathan*, and seems to be applied to Pharaoh; Ps. civ. 26, and in the passage before us, where it is rendered also *leviathan*. Bochart (*Hieroz.*, Part ii., B. v. ch. 16—18) has gone into an extended argument to show that by the *leviathan* the *crocodile* is intended; and his argument is, in my view, conclusive. On this subject, Bochart, Dr. Good on Job xli., and Robinson's *Calmet*, may be consulted. The crocodile is a natural inhabitant of the Nile and of other Asiatic and African rivers; is of enormous voracity and strength, as well as of fleetness in swimming; attacks mankind and all animals with prodigious impetuosity; and is furnished with a coat of mail so scaly and callous, that it will resist the force of a musket ball in every part except under the belly. It is, therefore, an appropriate image by which to describe a fierce and cruel tyrant. The sacred writers were accustomed to describe kings and tyrants by an allusion to strong and fierce animals. Thus in Ezek. xxix. 3—5, the dragon, or the crocodile of the Nile, is put for Pharaoh; in Ezek. xxxii. 2, Pharaoh is compared to a young lion and to a whale in the seas. In Ps. lxxiv. 13, 14, Pharaoh is compared to the Dragon, and to the Leviathan. In Dan. vii. 3, the four monarchs that should arise are likened to four great beasts. In Rev. xii. 3, Rome, the new Babylon, is compared to a great red dragon. In the place before us, I suppose that the reference is to Babylon; or to the king and tyrant that ruled there, and that had oppressed the people of God. But among commentators there has been the greatest variety of explanation. As a *specimen* of the various senses which commentators often assign to passages of Scripture, we may notice the following views which have been taken of this passage. The Chaldee Paraphrast regards the *Leviathan* which is twice mentioned as referring, the first one to some king like Pharaoh, and the second to a king like Sennacherib. Rabbi Moses Hacohen supposes that the word denotes the most select or valiant of the rulers, princes, and commanders, that were in the army of the enemy of the people of God. Jarchi supposes that by the first mentioned *Leviathan* is meant Egypt, by the last mentioned, Assyria, and by the dragon which is in the sea, he thinks *Tyre* is intended. Aben Ezra supposes that by the dragon in the sea Egypt is denoted. Kimchi supposes that this will be fulfilled only in the times of the Messiah, and that by the sea-monsters here mentioned are denoted Gog and Magog—and that these denote the armies of the Greeks, the Saracens, and the inhabitants of India. Abarbanel supposes that the Saracens, the Roman Empire, and the other kingdoms of Gentiles, are denoted by these sea-monsters. Jerome, Sanctius, and some

2. In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard<sup>b</sup> of red wine.

<sup>b</sup> Luke 20. 9, &c.

NEW TRANSLATION.

2. In that day, sing ye unto the vineyard a responsive song:—

others, suppose that *Satan* is denoted by the Leviathan. Brentius supposes that this was fulfilled in the day of Pentecost, when Satan was overcome by the preaching of the gospel. Other Christian interpreters have supposed that by the Leviathan first mentioned *Mahomet* is intended, by the second, *heretics*, and by the dragon in the sea, *Pagan India*. Luther understood it of Assyria and Egypt; Calvin supposes that the description properly applies to the king of Egypt, but that under this image other enemies of the church are embraced, and does not doubt that, *allegorically*, Satan and his kingdom are intended. The more simple interpretation, however, is that which refers it to Babylon. This suits the connexion; this accords with the previous chapters; this agrees with all that occurs in this chapter, and with the image which is here used. The crocodile, the dragon, the sea-monster—extended, vast, unwieldy, voracious, and odious to the view—would be a most expressive image to denote the abhorrence with which the Jews would regard Babylon and its king. ¶ *The piercing serpent*. The term *serpent*, נָחָשׁ, may be given to a dragon, or an extended sea-monster. Comp. Job xxvi. 13. The term *piercing* is, in the margin, “*or crossing like a bar*.” The LXX render it, *flying*—ὄφιν φεύγοντα. The Heb., נָחָשׁ, is derived from נָחַץ, to flee; and then, to stretch across, or pass through as a bar through boards, Ex. xxxvi. 33. Hence this word may mean fleeing, extended, or a cross-bar for fastening gates, or for the cross-piece for binding together the boards for the tabernacle of the congregation. Ex. xxvi. 26; xxxvi. 31. Lowth renders it, “the rigid serpent;” probably with reference to the hard scales of the crocodile. The word *extended*, *huge*, *vast*, will probably best suit the connexion. In Job xxvi. 13,

it is rendered, “the crooked serpent;” referring to the constellation in the heavens by the name of the serpent. Dr. Good (Note on Job xxvi. 13) supposes that the phrase there refers to “that serpentine track which we behold the sun pursuing through the Zodiac”—“the flying, or the aerial serpent.” The word here refers to that which is extended, flying, tortuous—and is used to represent the vast extent of the power of the king of Babylon. The idea of *piercing* is not in the Hebrew word, nor is it ever used in that sense. ¶ *That crooked serpent*. This is correctly rendered; and refers to the fact that the monster here referred to throws itself into immense volumes or folds, a description that applies to all sea-serpents of vast size. Virgil has given a description of sea-monsters, or vast serpents, that thus throw themselves into vast convolutions,

“Ecce autem gemini a Tenedo tranquilla per  
alta

IMMENSIS ORBIBUS anques.”

ÆNEID. Lib. ii. 203.

And again:

“SINUANTQUE IMMENSE VOLUMINE terga.”

Ibid. 208.

The reference in Isaiah, I suppose, is not to *different* kings, or enemies of the people of God, but to the same. It is customary in Hebrew poetry to refer to the same subject or object in different members of the same sentence, or in different parts of the same parallelism. ¶ *The dragon*. Referring to the same thing under a different image—to the king of Babylon. On the meaning of the word *dragon*, see Note, ch. xiii. 22. ¶ *In the sea*. In the Euphrates; or in the marshes and pools that encompass Babylon. See Notes on ch. xi. 15, and ch. xviii. 2. The sense of the whole verse is, that God would destroy the Babylonish power that was to the Jews such an object of loathsomeness and of terror.

2. Sing ye unto her. That is, sing

3. I <sup>c</sup> the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest *any* hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

4. Fury is not in me: who

<sup>c</sup> Ps. 121. 4, 5.

would set the briers *and* thorns against me in battle? I would <sup>1</sup> go through them, I would burn them together.

<sup>1</sup> or, *march against.*

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

3. "I JEHOVAH am its keeper;  
"Every moment I water it;  
"Lest any one should assault it,  
"Day and night do I guard it.
4. "I will be angry with it no more.  
"But let me reach the briers and thorns  
"And I will go against them in battle,  
"And I will burn them up together.

unto, or respecting, the vineyard. The word rendered "sing," *ny*, signifies, properly, to *answer*, to *respond to*; and then, to sing a responsive song, where one portion of the choir responds to another. See Ex. xv. 21. This has been well expressed here by Lowth in his translation,

To the beloved Vineyard, sing ye a responsive song.

It is the commencement of a song, or hymn, respecting Judea, represented under the image of a vineyard, and which is probably continued to the close of the chapter. ¶ *A vineyard.* This is applied to the daughter of Zion; to Jerusalem; or perhaps to the land of Judea in general. See Notes, ch. v. 1, &c. This phrase is the title to the song, or the responsive song respects the "vineyard of red wine." ¶ *Of red* proposes

to read instead of this, *ny*, *Hhēmēdh*; pleasantness, beauty, or beloved. He observes that many MSS. have this reading, and that it is followed by the LXX and the Chaldee. The LXX read it, *ἀμπέλων καλὸς*, *beautiful vineyard*. This would well suit the connexion; and this slight error in transcribing might have easily occurred. But the authority in the MSS. for the change is not conclusive. The word which now occurs in the text denotes properly *wine*, from *ny*, to be agitated,

to ferment. The word *ny*, also, has the signification *to be red*, (Ps. lxxv. 9; Job xvi. 16;) and according to this, our translators have rendered it, "of red wine." Bochart (Geogr. S. P. ii. L. i. ch. xxix.) renders it, "a vineyard fertile in producing wine." The correct translation would be one that would not seem very congruous in our language, "a vineyard of wine," or "a wine-vineyard."

3. *I the LORD do keep it.* There is understood here, or implied, an introduction; "JEHOVAH said." Comp. Ps. cxxi. 3—5. ¶ *I will water it every moment.* That is, as a vinedresser does his vineyard—constantly.

4. *Fury is not in me.* That is, I am angry with it no more; I will not pursue it with vengeance, lest it be destroyed. He had punished his people, and had

their sins, and corrected them for their faults, yet he had not laid aside the affection of a Father. ¶ *Who would set.* Heb., *Who would give me.* The LXX render this, "Who would place me to keep the stubble in the field?" Great perplexity has been felt in regard to the interpretation of this passage. Lowth translates it,

O that I had a fence of the thorn and the brier;

evidently showing that he was embarrassed with it, and could not make of it

5. Or let him take hold of my <sup>d</sup> strength, *that* he may make peace <sup>e</sup> with me; *and* he shall make peace with me.

6. He shall cause them that

ch. 45. 24.

e Job 22. 21.

come of Jacob to take root: <sup>f</sup> Israel shall blossom and bud, and <sup>g</sup> fill the face of the world with fruit.

f Ps. 92. 13—15. Hos. 14. 5, 6.  
g Rom. 11. 12.

NEW TRANSLATION.

5. "Unless they take hold of my protection,

"And with me make peace.

"With me let them make peace.

6. "Those that come out of Jacob shall he cause to take root;

consistent sense. The whole sentence must refer either to his people, or to his enemies. If to his people, it would be an indication that they were like briars and thorns, and that if his fury should rage, they would be consumed; and hence he calls upon them (ver. 5) to seize upon his strength, and to be at peace with him, and be safe. If it refers to his enemies, then it expresses a *wish* that his enemies were in his possession; or a purpose to go against them, as fire among thorns, and to consume them if they should presume to array themselves against his vineyard. This latter I take to be the true sense of the passage. The phrase, "who would set me," or in Heb., "who will give me," may be expressed by *utinam*, indicating strong desire; and may be thus expressed: "I retain no anger against my people. I have indeed punished them; but my anger has ceased. I shall now defend them. If they are attacked by foes, I will guard them. When their foes approach, *I desire, I earnestly wish*, that they may be in my possession, that I may destroy them—as the fire rages through briars and thorns." It expresses a firm determination to defend his people and to destroy their enemies, unless (ver. 5), which he would prefer, they should repent, and be at peace with him. ¶ *The briars and thorns.* His enemies, and the enemies of his people. Comp. Notes, ch. ix. 18; x. 17. Perhaps the phrase is here used to denote enemies, because briars and thorns are so great enemies to a vineyard, or because they so much impede its growth and fertility ¶ *I*

would go through them. Or rather, I would go against them in battle to destroy them. ¶ *I would burn them together.* As fire devours the thorns and briars; that is, I would completely destroy them.

5 *Or let him.* The Hebrew word rendered here "or," *u*, means *unless*; and the sense is, the enemies of the Jewish people shall be completely destroyed, as briars are by fire, *unless* they flee to God for a refuge. ¶ *Take hold of my strength.* That is, let the enemy take hold of me to become reconciled to me. The figure here is taken probably from the act of fleeing to take hold of the horns of the altar for a refuge when one was pursued. Comp. 1 Kings i. 50; ii. 28. The idea is, however, that of seeking the protection of God, with the assurance that if that is done, they would be safe. ¶ *That he may make peace with me.* With me as the guardian of the vineyard. If this were done, they would be safe. ¶ *And he shall make peace with me.* That is, even the enemy of me and of my vineyard may be permitted to make peace with me. Learn (1.) that God is willing to be reconciled to the enemies of himself and his church. (2.) That that peace must be sought by seeking his protection; by submitting to him, and laying hold of his strength, or his protecting care. (3.) That if this is not done, his enemies must be inevitably destroyed. (4.) He will defend his people, and no weapon that is formed against them shall prosper.

6. *He shall cause them that come of*

7. Hath he smitten him,<sup>1</sup> as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?

<sup>1</sup> according to the stroke of.

8. In measure, when<sup>1</sup> it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it:<sup>2</sup> he stayeth his<sup>h</sup> rough wind in the day of the east wind.

<sup>1</sup> or, thou sendest it forth.

<sup>2</sup> or, when he removeth it.

<sup>h</sup> ch. 57. 16.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

"Israel shall blossom and bud,

"And shall fill the face of the world with fruit.

7. Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him?

"Is he slain like the slaughter of his slain?

8. "In sending her away thou didst judge her in moderation;

"[Though] carrying her away with a rough tempest in the time of the East wind.

*Jacob.* The descendants of Jacob; the people of God. ¶ *To take root.* This language is derived from the vine, as the shoots or cuttings of the vine take root and flourish. To take root, therefore, is an emblem denoting that they should increase and prosper. ¶ *Shall blossom and bud.* An image taken from the vine, or from fruit trees in general, and meaning, that they should greatly flourish in the time succeeding their return from the captivity. ¶ *And fill the face of the world with fruit.* On the meaning of the word "face," see Note, ch. xxv. 7. The sense is, that the people of God would greatly increase and flourish; that the true religion would greatly extend and ultimately fill the entire world. The same idea of the universal spread and prevalence of the true religion is often presented by this prophet; and occurs also in various parts of the hymns or songs which we are now considering. See ch. xxv. 6, 7, 8. The figure which is here used, drawn from the vine, denoting prosperity by its increase and its fruit, is beautifully employed in Ps. xcii. 13, 14:

Those that he planted in the house of JEHOVAH

Shall flourish in the courts of our God.

They shall still bring forth fruit in old age;

They shall be rich and green.

The idea here is, that it shall be *through the Jews* that the world shall be filled with fruit; that is, with righteousness and salvation.

7. *Hath he smitten him.* Has God punished his people in the same manner and to the same extent as he has their enemies. It is implied by this question that he had not. He had, indeed, punished them for their sins, but he had not destroyed them. Their enemies he had smitten, and utterly destroyed. ¶ *As he smote those that smote him?* That smote his people, the Jews. This refers to the Babylonians, and the other foes of his people. ¶ *According to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?* Heb., "According to the slaying of his slain." That is, not as our translation would seem to imply, that their enemies had been slain by them; but that they were "their slain," inasmuch as they had been slain on their account; or to promote their release and return to their own land. It was not true that their enemies had been slain by them; but it was true that they had been slain on their account, or in order to secure their return to their own land.

8. *In measure, &c.* This verse in our translation is exceedingly obscure, and indeed almost unintelligible. Nor is it much more intelligible in Lowth, or in Noyes. It is exceedingly obscure also in the Vulgate, and the Septuagint. The various senses which have been given to the verse may be seen at length in Vitringa, Rosenmüller, &c. The idea, which I suppose to be the true one, without going into an exami-

9. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; <sup>1</sup> and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the

<sup>1</sup> Heb. 12. 6.

NEW TRANSLATION.

9. "But by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be expiated;

nation of the others which have been proposed, is the following, which is as near as possible a literal translation:

In moderation in sending her [the vineyard] away didst thou judge her,  
Though carrying her away with a rough tempest in the time of the East wind.

The word rendered "measure," מִסָּפָה, occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures. It is probably derived from סָפָה, a measure; usually denoting a measure of grain, containing, according to the Rabbins, a third part of an ephah, i. e., about a peck among us. The word here used is probably a contraction of סָפָה מִסָּפָה, literally, measure by measure, i. e., moderately, or in moderation. So the Rabbins generally understand it. The idea is, "small measure by small measure," not a large measure at a time; or, in other words, moderately, or in moderation. It refers, I suppose, to the fact that in inflicting judgment on his people it had not been done with intolerable severity. His punishments had been tempered with moderation and kindness. The calamity had not been so overwhelming as at once and entirely to cut them off, but had been tempered with mercy. ¶ *When it shooteth forth.* This expression does not convey an intelligible idea. The Hebrew, שֶׁלְּחָהּ—literally, "in sending her forth," from שָׁלַח, to send, or to put forth—refers, I suppose, to the fact that God had sent her [i. e., his vineyard, his people] forth to Babylon; he had cast them out of their own land into a distant country, but when it was done it was tempered with mercy, and with moderation. In this expression there is indeed a mingling of a metaphor with a literal statement, since it appears rather incongruous to speak of sending forth a vineyard, but such changes in expressions are not uncommon in the Hebrew poets. ¶ *Thou wilt debate with it.* Or

rather, thou hast judged it; or, thou hast punished it. The word דָּבַר means sometimes, to debate, contend, or strive; but it means also, to take vengeance (1 Sam. xxv. 39), or to punish; to contend with any one so as to overcome or punish him. Here it refers to the fact that God had had a contention with his people, and had punished them by removing them to Babylon.

¶ *He stayeth.* יָהַר. This word means in one form, to meditate, to think, to speak; in another, to separate, as dross from silver, to remove, to take away. Prov. xxv. 4, 5. Here it means that he had removed or separated his people from their land as with the sweepings of a tempest. The word "stayeth" does not express the true sense of the passage. It is better expressed in the margin, "when he removeth it." ¶ *His rough wind.* A tempestuous, boisterous wind which God sends. Winds are emblematic of judgment, as they sweep away everything before them. Here the word is emblematic of the calamities which came upon Judea by which the nation was removed to Babylon; and the sense is, that they were removed as in a tempest; they were visited as if a violent storm had swept over the land. ¶ *In the day of the east wind.* The east wind in the climate of Judea was usually tempestuous and violent. Job xxvii. 21:

The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth;

And, as a storm, hurleth him out of his place.

Jer. xviii. 17:

I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy.

Comp. Gen. xli. 6; Hab. i. 9; Ex. x. 13; xiv. 21; Job xxxviii. 24; Ps. lxxviii. 26. This wind was usually hot, noxious, blasting, and scorching. Taylor.

9. *By this.* This verse states the whole design of the punishment of the

stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and <sup>1</sup> images shall not stand up.

10. Yet the defenced city shall

<sup>1</sup> or, *sun images*.

be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

"And the design of all this is to remove his sin,

"When he maketh all the stones of the altar

"Like chalk stones that are broken to pieces,

"And the groves and the images shall rise no more.

10. "For the defenced city shall be desolate;

"An habitation forsaken, and it shall be deserted like a wilderness;

"There shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down,

"And shall browse upon her branches.

Jews, which was to purify them, and to destroy their tendency to idolatry. They have been taken away from their temple, their city, and their land; they have been removed from the groves and altars of idolatry by which they had been so often led into sin; and the design was to purify them, and preserve them henceforward from relapsing into their accustomed idolatry. ¶ *The iniquity of Jacob*. The sin of the Jewish people, and particularly their tendency to idolatry, which was their easily besetting sin. ¶ *Be purged*. Note, ch. i. 25. ¶ *And this is all the fruit*. And this is all the *object* or *design* of their captivity and removal to Babylon. ¶ *When he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones*. That is, JEHOVAH shall make the stones of the altars reared in honor of idols like chalkstones; or shall throw them down, and scatter them abroad like stones that are easily beaten to pieces. The sense is, that JEHOVAH, during their long captivity in Babylon, would overthrow the places where they had worshipped idols. ¶ *The groves and images shall not stand up*. The groves consecrated to idols, and the images erected therein. See Note, ch. xvii. 8.

10. *Yet the defenced city*. Gesenius supposes that this means Jerusalem. So Calvin and Piscator understand it. Others understand it of Samaria, others

of Babylon (as Vitringa, Rosenmüller, and Grotius), and others of cities in general, denoting those in Judea, or in other places. To me it seems plain that Babylon is referred to. The connexion and the whole description seem to require this; and especially the fact that this song is supposed to be sung *after* the return from the captivity, and to celebrate their deliverance. It is natural, therefore, that they should record the fact, that the strong and mighty city where they had been so long in gloomy captivity was now completely destroyed. For the meaning of the phrase "defenced city," see Note, ch. xxv. 2. ¶ *Shall be desolate*. See ch. xxv. 2. Comp. Notes on ch. xiii. ¶ *The habitation forsaken*. The habitation here referred to is Babylon. It means, the habitation or dwelling place where we have so long dwelt as captives. Comp. Prov. iii. 33, xxi. 20, xxiv. 15. ¶ *And left like a wilderness*. See the description of Babylon in the Notes on ch. xiii. 20—22. ¶ *There shall the calf feed, &c.* It shall cease to be inhabited by men, shall become a vast desert, and be a place for beasts of the forest to range in. Comp. ch. vii. 23. See Note, ch. v. 17. ¶ *And consume the branches thereof*. The branches of the trees and shrubs that shall spring up spontaneously in the waste places of Babylon.



11. When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come and set them on fire: for <sup>k</sup> it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no

<sup>k</sup> Deut. 32. 28. Hos. 4. 6.

favor.

12. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and <sup>l</sup> ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.

<sup>l</sup> John 6. 37.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

11. "When the boughs are withered they shall be broken off;  
 "Women shall come and shall set them on fire;  
 "For it is a people void of understanding:  
 "Wherefore he that made him doth not pity him,  
 "And he that formed him hath showed him no favor.
12. "And it shall come to pass in that day,  
 "That JEHOVAH shall beat off [his fruit]  
 "From the channel of the river [the Euphrates]  
 "To the river of Egypt [the Nile];  
 "And ye shall be gleaned up, one by one,  
 "O ye sons of Israel!

11. *When the boughs thereof are withered.* This is a further description of the desolation which should come upon Babylon. The idea is, that Babylon should be forsaken until the trees should grow and decay, and the branches should fall to be collected for burning. That is, the desolation should be entire, and undisturbed, and long continued. The idea of the desolation is therefore, in this verse, carried forward, and a new circumstance is introduced to make it more graphic and striking. Lowth, however, supposes that this refers to the vineyard, and to the fact that the vine-twigs are collected in the East from the scarcity of fuel for burning. But it seems to me that the obvious reference is to Babylon, and that it is an image of the great and prolonged desolation that was coming upon that city. ¶ *They shall be broken off.* That is, by their own weight as they decay; or by the hands of those who come to collect them for fuel. ¶ *The women come.* Probably it was the office mainly of the women to collect the fuel which might be necessary for culinary purposes. In eastern climates but little is

needed; and that is collected of the twigs of vineyards, of withered stubble, straw, hay, dried roots, &c., wherever they can be found. ¶ *And set them on fire.* That is, to burn them for fuel. ¶ *Of no understanding.* Of no right views of God, and his government—wicked, sinful. Prov. vi. 32, xviii. 2; Jer. v. 21.

12. *And it shall come to pass in that day.* The time here referred to is that when the power of their enemies should be broken, and their city destroyed, as described in the previous verses. ¶ *The Lord shall beat off.* The word which is here used, 𐤁𐤓𐤕, means, properly, to beat off with a stick, as fruit from a tree. Deut. xxiv. 20. It also means, to beat out grain with a stick. Judges vi. 11; Ruth ii. 17. The word which is used in the other member of the sentence, "shall be gathered" (𐤁𐤓𐤕), is applied to the act of *collecting* fruit after it has been beaten from a tree, or grain after it has been threshed. The use of these words here shows that the image is taken from the act of collecting fruit or grain after harvest; and

13. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the great trumpet <sup>m</sup> shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

*m* Matt. 24. 31. 1 Thes. 4. 16. Rev. 11. 15.

NEW TRANSLATION.

13. "And it shall come to pass in that day,  
 "That the great trumpet shall be sounded,  
 "And they shall come who were about to perish in the land of Assyria,  
 "And the exiles in the land of Egypt,  
 "And shall worship JEHOVAH in the holy mount, in Jerusalem."

that as the husbandman gathers in his fruit, so God would gather in his people. In the figure, it is supposed that the garden or vineyard of JEHOVAH extends from the Euphrates to the Nile; that his people are scattered in all that region; that there shall be agitation or a shaking in all that region as when a farmer shakes his tree, beats off his fruit, or beats out his grain; and that the result would be that all those scattered people should be gathered into their own land. The time referred to is, doubtless, the time after the destruction of Babylon; and in explanation of the declaration it is to be remembered that the Jews were not only carried to Babylon, but that they were scattered in large numbers in all the adjacent regions. The promise here is, that from all those regions whither they had been scattered they should be re-collected and restored to their own land. ¶ *From the channel of the river.* The river here undoubtedly refers to the river *Euphrates*. See Note, ch. xi. 15. ¶ *Unto the stream of Egypt.* The Nile. ¶ *And ye shall be gathered.* You shall be collected as a farmer collects his fruits that he has beaten from the tree. ¶ *One by one.* As the husbandman collects his fruits one by one—collecting them carefully, and not leaving any. This denotes that God will not merely collect them as a nation, but he will collect them as *individuals*. He will see that none is left, or overlooked, and that all shall be brought in safely to their land.

13. *The great trumpet shall be blown.*

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This verse is designed to describe in another mode the same fact as that stated in verse 12, that JEHOVAH would re-collect his scattered people. The figure is derived from the clangor of the trumpet which was blown to assemble a people for war (Grotius); or from the blowing of the trumpet on occasion of the great feasts and festivals of the Jews. Vitringa. The idea is, that God would summon the scattered people to return to their own land. The way in which this was done, or in which the will of God should be made known to them, is not specified. It is probable, however, that the reference here is to the decree of Cyrus (Ezra i. 1), by which they were permitted to return to their own country. ¶ *Which were ready to perish.* Who were reduced in numbers, and in power, and who were ready to be annihilated under their accumulated and long-continued trials. ¶ *In the land of Assyria.* The ten tribes were carried away into Assyria (2 Kings xvii. 6); and it is probable that many of the Jews of the other two tribes were also in that land. A portion of the ten tribes would also be re-collected, and would return with the others to the land of their fathers. Assyria also constituted a considerable part of the kingdom of the Chaldeans; and the name Assyria may be given here to that country in general. ¶ *And the outcasts.* Those who had fled in consternation to Egypt when these calamities were coming upon the nation. That many took refuge in Egypt there can be no doubt. ¶ *And shall worship*

the Lord. Shall be restored to their former privileges. Their temple shall be rebuilt; their city shall be restored; and in the place where their fathers worshipped shall they also again adore the living God. This closes the prophecy which was commenced in ch. xxiv.—and the design of the whole is to comfort the Jews with the assurance that though they were to be made captive in a distant land, yet they should be again restored to the land of their fathers, and should again worship God there. It is needless almost to say that this prediction was completely and entirely fulfilled by the return of the Jews to their own country under the decree of Cyrus.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### ANALYSIS.

This chapter comprises a new prophecy, and relates to a new subject. Geseñius supposes that it is to be connected with the following to the close of ch. xxxiii., and that they both relate to the same subject, and were delivered at the same time. Munster supposes that the prophecy here commenced continues to the close of ch. xxxv., and that it relates to the Assyrian war in which the ten tribes were punished, and carried away captive. Doederlein supposes that this chapter and the two following were uttered at the same time and relate to the same subject. Hensler supposes that the prophecy closes at the twenty-third chapter.

It is not improbable that this chapter and the following were delivered at the same time, and that they relate to the same general subject—the approaching calamities and wars with the Assyrians, which would terminate only in the removal of the people to a distant land, and in the destruction of the entire city and nation. But the prophecy in this chapter has not any necessary connexion with those which follow, and it may be regarded as separate.

When it was uttered is not certainly known. It is clear, however, that it was before the carrying away of the ten tribes, or while the kingdom of

Ephraim or Samaria was still standing. Yet it would seem that it was while that kingdom was exceedingly corrupt, and while it was hastening to a fall, ver. 1—4. Perhaps it was in the time of Ahaz, or in the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah, when Samaria or Ephraim had entered into a league with Rezin, king of Damascus, and may therefore synchronize with ch. vii. viii. Whenever it was uttered, it is certain that its purpose was to predict the overthrow of Ephraim, or Samaria, and the fact that when that kingdom should be overthrown the kingdom of Judah should still survive.

The prophecy consists of two parts. 1. The overthrow of Samaria, or Ephraim (ver. 1—4). 2. The fact that JEHOVAH would preserve and defend a portion of his people—those who comprised the kingdom of Judah, ver. 5, 6, &c. The following brief view will present an analysis of the prophecy.

I. *Ephraim, or Samaria, for its sins, particularly for intemperance, should be overthrown.* ver. 1—4.

II. *God should preserve the residue of his people, yet they also deserved rebuke, and should be also subjected to punishment.* ver. 5—29.

- (1.) He would preserve them (ver. 5, 6), and be their glory and strength.
- (2.) Yet they deserved, on many accounts, to be reprov'd, particularly because many even of the priests and prophets were intemperate. ver. 7, 8.
- (3.) They also disregarded the messages of God, and treated them with contempt and scorn, as being vain repetitions and a mere stammering, and regarded themselves as not needing *such* communications, but as being themselves sufficiently wise. ver. 9—13.
- (4.) They regarded themselves as safe, and as being under no necessary apprehension of punishment, since they were firm and united, and had, as it were, made a league with death. ver. 14, 15.
- (5.) God, in view of their sins, threatens them with deserved

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. Woe to the crown of pride,  
to the drunkards of Ephraim,  
whose glorious beauty is a fading

flower, which *are* on the head of  
the fat valleys of them that *are* <sup>1</sup>  
overcome with wine!

<sup>1</sup> broken.

NEW TRANSLATION.

VISION XXIII.—Ch. xxviii. *Ephraim.*

1. Wo to the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim,  
And to the fading flower of their glorious beauty,  
Which is upon the head of the rich valley,  
Of those who are smitten with wine.

punishment. ver. 16—21. This would occur in the following manner:

- (a.) He would lay in Zion a sure foundation, his people should not be utterly destroyed, but there should be laid there a corner stone, tried and precious, which should abide, and *all* that regarded that should be safe. This refers, doubtless, to the Messiah, and it is implied that however much *they* should be punished, yet that his government should not be destroyed. ver. 16.
- (b.) Yet heavy judgments should come upon the guilty and the unbelieving. Judgment should be laid to the line, and the storms of divine vengeance should sweep away their false refuges, and their covenant with death should not avail them. ver. 17—19.
- (c.) Their refuges should not secure them. They should no more give them rest than a bed that was too short would to a weary man; no more secure them than a covering that was too small for a man to wrap himself in. ver. 20.
- (d.) God would certainly rise up against them as in Mount Perazim and in Gibeon, and would certainly punish them as he did his foes there. ver. 21.
- (e.) The people are therefore admonished to attend to this, for the destruction was determined upon the whole land. ver. 22.

(f.) The whole account of their punishment is concluded by a reference to the conduct of a husbandman, and an illustration drawn from the fact that the husbandman takes various methods to secure his harvest. He ploughs; he sows; and in various ways he threshes his grain. So in various ways God would deal with his people. He would instruct, and admonish, and correct and punish them, in order that he might secure the *greatest amount of piety, and good fruits from them*. Chastisement was just as necessary and proper for them as it was for the husbandman in various modes to beat out his grain.

1. *Woe*. See Note, ch. xviii. 1. The word here is used to denounce impending judgment; and to intimate that calamity was approaching. ¶ *To the crown of pride*. This is a Hebrew mode of expression, denoting *the proud or haughty crown*. There can be no doubt that it refers to the capital of the kingdom of Ephraim; that is, to Samaria. See Note, ch. vii. 9. This city was built by Omri, who purchased "the hill Samaria" of Shemer, and built the city on the hill, and called it after the name of Shemer, Samaria. 1 Kings xvi. 24. Omri was king of Israel (B. C. 925), and he made this city the capital of his kingdom. The city was built on a pleasant and fruitful hill, and surrounded with a rich and fertile valley, with a circle of hills beyond the valley;

2. Behold, the LORD hath a | mighty and strong one, *which* as

NEW TRANSLATION.

2. Lo, the Lord hath one mighty and strong;

and the beauty of the hill on which the city was built suggested the idea of a wreath or chaplet of flowers, or a *crown*. After having been destroyed and reduced to an inconsiderable place, it was restored by Herod the Great who called it *Sebaste* (in Latin, *Augusta*), in honor of the emperor Augustus. It is usually mentioned by travellers under the name of *SEBASTE*. Maundrell (*Trav.* p. 58), says, "SEBASTE, the ancient Samaria, is situated on a long mount of an oval figure; having first a fruitful valley, and then a ring of hills running round it." The following is the account which is given by Richardson. "Its situation is extremely beautiful, and strong by nature; more so I think than Jerusalem. It stands on a fine large insulated hill, compassed all round by a broad, deep valley. The valley is surrounded by four hills, one on each side, which are cultivated in terraces to the top, sown with grain and planted with fig and olive trees, as is also the valley. The hill of Samaria likewise, rises in terraces to a height equal to any of the adjoining mountains." Standing thus by itself, and cultivated to the top, and exceedingly fertile, it was compared by the prophet to a crown, or garland of flowers—such as used to be worn on the head, especially on festival occasions. ¶ *To the drunkards of Ephraim*. Ephraim here denotes the kingdom of Israel whose capital was Samaria. See Note, ch. vii. 2. That intemperance was the prevailing sin in the kingdom of Israel is not improbable. It also prevailed to a great extent in the kingdom of Judah. See vs. 7, 8. Comp. Notes, ch. v. 11, 22. ¶ *Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower*. Whose ornament, or chaplet which is now so beautiful is a fading flower. That is, it shall soon be destroyed, as a flower soon withers and fades away. This was fulfilled in the destruction that came upon Samaria under the Assyrians,

when the ten tribes were carried into captivity. 2 Kings xvii. 3—6. The allusion in this verse to the "crown," and "the fading flower," the chaplet which is represented to encircle Samaria—a people of intemperance—Grotius thinks is derived from the fact that among the ancients, drunkards and revellers were accustomed to wear a crown or garland on their heads, or that a wreath or chaplet of flowers was usually worn on their festival occasions. That this custom prevailed among the Jews as well as among the Greeks and Romans, is apparent from a statement by the author of the book of Wisdom.

"Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ornaments,  
And let no flower of the spring pass by us;  
Let us crown ourselves with rose buds before they are withered."

Wisdom, ii. 7, 8.

¶ *Which are on the head*. Which flowers, or chaplets, are on the eminence that rises over the fat valleys; that is, on Samaria, which seemed to stand as the head rising from the valley. ¶ *Of the fat valleys*. Of the rich and fertile valleys. ¶ *Of them that are overcome with wine*. That are occupied by, or in the possession of those who are overcome with wine. The margin reads "broken" with wine. The Hebrew is, those who are "smitten with wine," שִׁמְיָהוּ נִי, —corresponding to the Greek, οἰνοπληγῆ—that is, they were overcome, or subdued by it. A man's reason, conscience, moral feelings, and physical strength are all overcome or deranged by indulgence in wine, and the entire man is prostrate by it. This passage is a proof of what has been often denied, but which further examination has abundantly confirmed, that the inhabitants of wine countries are as certainly intemperate as those which make use of ardent spirits.

2. Behold, the LORD hath a mighty and strong one. The Hebrew of this

a tempest <sup>a</sup> of hail *and* a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

3. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden <sup>1</sup> under feet:

<sup>a</sup> Ezek. 13. 11.

<sup>1</sup> with.

4. And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley shall be <sup>b</sup> a fading flower, *and* as the hasty fruit before the summer; which *when* he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth <sup>2</sup> it up.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 73. 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> swalloweth.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

Like a tempest of hail,  
Like a destroying storm,  
Like a flood of mighty, overflowing waters,  
Shall he dash them to the ground with his hand.

3. Under feet shall they be trodden—  
The proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim.

4. And the fading flower of their glorious beauty,  
Which is at the head of the rich valley,  
Shall be as the early fig before the summer;  
Which when one seeth it,  
He swallows it as soon as it is in his hand.

passage is, "Lo! there is to the Lord (לֵאלֹהִים) mighty and strong." Lowth renders it,

Behold the mighty one, the exceedingly strong one,

and supposes that it means the Lord himself. It is evident, however, that something must be understood as being that which the Lord "hath," for the Hebrew properly implies that there is something strong and mighty which is under his control, and with which, as with a tempest, he will sweep away and destroy Ephraim. Jarchi supposes that רוח *wind* is understood; Kimchi, that the word is יום *day*; others that צֶהָל *an army* is understood. But, I think the obvious interpretation is to refer it to the Assyrian king that would be the agent by which JEHOVAH would destroy Samaria. 2 Kings xvii. 3—6. This power or king was entirely under the direction of JEHOVAH, and would be commissioned or employed by him in accomplishing his purpose on that guilty people. Comp. Notes on ch. x. 5, 6. ¶ *As a tempest of hail.* A storm of hail is a most striking representa-

tion of the desolation that is produced by the ravages of an invading army. Comp. Job xxvii. 21; Note, ch. xxvii. 8. Also Hosea xiii. 15. ¶ *A flood of mighty waters.* This is also a striking description of the devastating effects of an invading army. Comp. Ps. xc. 5; Jer. xlvii. 7, 8. ¶ *Shall cast down to the earth.* To cast it to the earth means that it should be entirely humbled and destroyed. Note, ch. xxv. 12. ¶ *With the hand.* LXX, *Big.* Force, violence. This is its meaning here; as if it were taken in the hand, like a cup, and dashed indignantly to the ground.

4. *As the hasty fruit before the summer.* The word rendered "hasty fruit," בֹּחֲבֹרֶה, in Arabic, *Bokhore*, in Spanish, *Albacore*, denotes the *early fig*. This ripens in June; the common fig does not ripen until August. Shaw (in his *Travels*, p. 370) says, "no sooner does the *Boccore* (the early fig) draw near to perfection in the middle or latter end of June, than the *Kermez* or summer fig begins to be formed, though it rarely ripens before August, about which time the same tree frequently throws out a third crop, or the winter fig, as we

5. In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,
6. And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

5. In that day JEHOVAH of hosts shall be a glorious crown,  
And a beautiful diadem to the remnant of his people,
6. And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment,  
And for strength to them that turn back the battle to the  
gate of [the enemy].

may call it. This is usually of a much longer shape and darker complexion than the kermes, hanging and ripening on the tree after the leaves are shed; and provided the winter be mild and temperate it is gathered as a delicious morsel in the spring." Com. Hos. ix. 10. The phrase "before the summer," means before the heat of the summer, when the common fig was usually ripe. The idea here is this, the early fig would be plucked and eaten with great greediness. So the city of Samaria would be seized upon and destroyed with great greediness by its enemies. ¶ Which when he that looketh upon it seeth, &c. That is, as soon as he sees it he plucks it, and eats it at once. He does not preserve it; does not lay it up for future use, but as soon as he has it in his hand he devours it. So as soon as the Assyrian should see Samaria he would come suddenly upon it, and take it, and destroy it. This is an apt emblem, says Vitringa, to denote the manner in which the Assyrians would take and destroy Samaria. It was usual for conquerors to preserve the cities which they took in war for future use, to make them a part of the strength or ornament of their kingdom. But Samaria was to be at once destroyed. Its inhabitants were to be carried away, and it would be demolished as greedily as a hungry man plucks and eats the first fig that ripens on the tree.

5. In that day. This verse commences a new subject, and affirms that while the kingdom of Israel should be destroyed, the kingdom of Judah should be preserved and restored.

Comp. ch. vii.—ix. ¶ Be for a crown of glory. He shall rule in Judah and Jerusalem. He shall reign there as its king, and he shall guard and defend the remnant of his people there. This reign of JEHOVAH shall be to them better than palaces, towers, walls, and fruitful fields, and shall be a more glorious ornament to them than the proud city of Samaria was to the kingdom of Israel. ¶ And for a diadem of beauty. A beautiful garland. The phrase stands opposed to the wreath of flowers, or the diadem which was represented (ver. 1, 3), to adorn the kingdom and capital of Israel. JEHOVAH, and his government would be to them their chief glory and ornament. ¶ Unto the residue of his people. To the kingdom of Judah comprising the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. This doubtless refers to the comparatively prosperous and happy times of the reign of Hezekiah. Under his reign the nation would be safe and happy.

6. And for a spirit of judgment. Comp. Note, ch. i. 26, xi. 2. The sense of this passage is, that JEHOVAH would enlighten and instruct the judges of the land, so that they should understand what was right, and be disposed to do it. ¶ To him that sitteth in judgment. This is to be understood collectively, and means those who sat upon the bench of justice; that is, the magistracy in general. ¶ And for strength to them. He shall give strength to them. ¶ That turn the battle to the gate. That is, to the very gate of their enemies; who not only repel their foes from their own city, but who drive their foes even

7. But they also have erred through wine, <sup>c</sup> and through strong drink are out of the way; the <sup>d</sup> priest and the prophet have

<sup>c</sup> Hos. 4. 11.

<sup>d</sup> ch. 56. 10—12.

erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

7. But even they stagger through wine;

They reel through strong drink:

The priest and the prophet stagger through strong drink;

They are absorbed with wine;

They reel through strong drink;

They reel in vision, they stumble in judgment.

to the gates of their own cities, and besiege them there. Thus 2 Sam. xi. 23, "And we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate;" that is, we drove them back unto their own gates.

7. *But they also have erred through wine.* In the previous verses the prophet had said that the kingdom of Judah should be saved while that of Ephraim should be destroyed. Yet he does not deny that they also were guilty of crimes for which punishment would come upon them. To portray these crimes, and to declare the certain judgment which would come upon them, is the design of the remainder of the chapter. The word rendered "have erred," *נָסוּ*, refers usually to the fact that men stagger or reel through wine, and is applied commonly to those who are intoxicated. Prov. xx. 1. The subsequent part of this verse shows, however, that it does not refer merely to the fact that they stagger and reel as intemperate men do, but that it had an effect on their "vision" and their "judgment;" that is, it disqualified them for the discharge of their duties as priests and as prophets. In this part of the verse, however, the simple idea is, that they reel or stagger through wine, *i. e.* they are given to intoxication. In the subsequent part of the verse the prophet states the effect in producing indistinctness of vision and error of judgment. ¶ *And through strong drink.* See Note, ch. v. 11. ¶ *They*

*are out of the way, נָסוּ.* They wander; stagger; reel. Comp. ch. xix. 14.

¶ *The priest and the prophet.* Probably these persons are specified to denote the higher classes of society. It is probable that the prophet also designs to indicate the enormity of the sins of the nation, from the fact that those who were specially devoted to religion, and those who were supposed to have immediate communication with God, were addicted to intemperance. ¶ *They are swallowed up of wine.* They are completely absorbed by it (see Note, ch. xxv. 7); they not only themselves indulge in the use of wine, but they are themselves as it were swallowed up by it, so that their reason, and strength, and virtue are all gone—as an object is absorbed in a maelstrom or whirlpool. ¶ *They err in vision.* For the sense of the word "vision," see Note, ch. i. 1. The prophet here states the effect of the use of wine and strong drink on their mental and moral powers. It was the office of the prophets to declare the will of God; probably also to explain the sense of the sacred Scriptures, and to address the people on their duty. Here the prophet says that the effect of their intemperance was to lead them to error in regard to the truths which were to be declared and explained to the people. They had themselves no correct and clear views of the truth; and they led the people into error. ¶ *They stumble in judgment.* There were many im-



8. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean. ledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? <sup>1</sup> them that are weaned from the milk,

9. Whom <sup>c</sup> shall he teach know- and drawn from the breasts.

<sup>c</sup> Jer. 6. 10.

<sup>1</sup> the hearing.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

8. For all their tables are full of vomit;  
No place is free from filthiness.  
9. "Whom [say they] will he teach knowledge?  
"And to whom would he impart instruction?  
"To those just weaned from the milk?  
"And removed from the breast?

portant subjects on which the priests sat in judgment among the Hebrews, particularly in all matters pertaining to religion. In all this they erred through the influence of intoxicating liquors. They were disqualified for the high and holy functions of their office; and the consequence was that the nation was corrupt, and was exposed to the heavy judgment of God.

8. *For all tables, &c.* The tables where they eat, and at which they sit long in the use of wine. See Note, ch. v. 11. There was no place in their houses which was free from the disgusting and loathsome pollution produced by the use of wine.

9. *Whom shall he teach knowledge?* This verse commences a statement respecting another form of sin that prevailed among the people of Judah. That sin was profaneness, or contempt for the manner in which God instructed them by the prophets, and a disregard for his communications to them, as if they were suited to children and not to wise adults. That *scoffing* was the principal sin aimed at in these verses is apparent from verse 14. Vitringa supposes that these words (ver. 9, 10) are designed to describe the manner of teaching by the priests and the prophets, as being puerile, and silly, and adapted to children. Michaelis supposes that the prophet by these words means to signify that it would be a vain and fruitless labor to attempt to instruct these persons who were given to

wine, because they were unaccustomed to sound and true doctrine. Others have supposed that he means that these persons who were thus given to wine and strong drink were disqualified to instruct others, since their teachings were senseless and incoherent, and resembled the talk of children. But the true sense of the passage has undoubtedly been suggested by Lowth. According to this interpretation, the prophet speaks of them as scoffers, and as deriders of the manner in which God had spoken to them by his messengers. "What!" say they, "does God treat us as children? Does he deal with us as we deal with infants just weaned, perpetually repeating and inculcating the same elementary lesson, and teaching the mere rudiments of knowledge?" The expression, therefore, "Whom shall he teach knowledge?" or "whom does he teach," is an expression of contempt supposed to be spoken by the intemperate priests and prophets—the leaders of the people. "Whom does God take us to be? Does he regard us as mere children? Why are we treated as children with the mere rudiments of knowledge, and with endless repetition of the same elementary instruction?" ¶ *To understand doctrine?* Hebrew, as in the margin, "hearing," or report (Isa. liii. 1). The sense is, for whom is that instruction intended? Whom does he wish to be taught by it? ¶ *Them that are weaned from the milk, &c.* Does he regard and treat us as little children, as mere babes?

10. For precept *'must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little;

<sup>1</sup> or, *hath been.*

11. For with <sup>2</sup>stammering lips  
and another tongue <sup>3</sup> will he  
speak to his people.

• *stammerings of.*

<sup>3</sup> or, *he hath spoken.*

**NEW TRANSLATION.**

10. "For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept ;  
"Line upon line, line upon line ;  
"A little here, and a little there."
11. Yea, with a stammering lip, and in a strange tongue,  
Shall he speak unto this people—

10. *For precept must be upon precept.* This is probably designed to ridicule the concise and sententious manner of the true prophets, and especially the fact that they dwelt much upon the same elementary truths of religion. In teaching children we are obliged to do it by often repeating the same simple lesson. So the profane and scoffing teachers of the people said it had been with the prophets of God. It had been precept upon precept, line upon line, in the same way as children had been instructed. The meaning is, "command is upon command; there is a constant repetition of the command, without ornament, or imagery, or illustration; without an appeal to our understanding, or respect for our reason; it is simply *one mandate after another*, just as lessons are inculcated upon children."

[illegible]

*a little, and there a little.* In the manner of instructing children, inculcating the same elementary lesson constantly. It is a childish business. It may be observed here that God's method of inculcating religious truth has often appeared to a scoffing world to be undignified and foolish. Sinners suppose that God does not sufficiently respect their understanding, and pay a tribute to the dignity of their nature. The truths of God, and his modes of inculcating them, are said to be adapted to weak minds—to the understandings of childhood and of age; to imbecility of years, or to times when the mind is enfeebled by disease. This is especially true of the gospel, which requires all to receive it as little children.

11. *For.* This verse is probably to be understood as a response to what the complaining and dissatisfied people had said as expressed in the previous verse. God says, in this verse, that he will teach them, but it should be by another tongue—a foreign language in a distant land. Since they refused to hearken to the messages which he sent to them, and which they regarded as adapted only to children, he would teach them in a manner that should be *much more* humiliating; he would make use of the language of foreigners, which they held in utter contempt and scorn, to bring them to the true knowledge of God. ¶ *With stammering lips.* The word which is used here is derived from a verb (שָׁטַף), which means to speak unintelligibly; especially to speak in a foreign language, or to stammer; and then to

12. To whom he said, *This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.*

13. But <sup>f</sup> the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon pre-

<sup>f</sup> Hos. 6. 5; 8. 12.

cept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that <sup>g</sup> they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

<sup>g</sup> Matt. 13. 14.

NEW TRANSLATION.

12. He who said unto them,  
 "This is the rest wherewith ye may give rest to the weary;  
 "And this is the refreshment;"  
 But they would not hear.
13. Therefore shall the word of JEHOVAH be indeed unto them,  
 Precept upon precept, precept upon precept;  
 Line upon line, line upon line;  
 A little here and a little there;—  
 So that they go on, and fall backward,  
 And be broken, and snared, and caught.

mock, deride, laugh at, scorn. Comp. Isa. xxxiii. 19; Prov. i. 26; xvii. 5; Ps. ii. 4; lix. 9; Job xxii. 19. Here it means, in a foreign or barbarous tongue; and the sense is, that the lessons which God wished to teach would be conveyed to them through the language of foreigners—the Chaldeans; they should be removed to a distant land, and there in hearing a strange speech, in living long among foreigners, they should learn the lesson which they refused to do when addressed by the prophets in their own land.

12. *To whom he said.* To whom God had said; *i. e.* to the Jews. He *had* taught them the way of rest through the prophets, but they had refused to learn. ¶ *This is the rest, &c.* That is, this is the true way of rest or of happiness, to wit, by keeping the commands of God, which had been so often repeated as to become to them objects of satiety and disgust. ¶ *This is the refreshing.* This is the way in which the mind may be refreshed and comforted.

13. *But the word of the LORD was unto them.* Or rather, but the word of JEHOVAH shall be unto them precept upon precept, &c. This refers doubtless

to the mode in which God said he would instruct them in a foreign land. They had complained (ver. 9, 10) that He had taught them as children—that his instructions had been like a short lesson constantly repeated, or told over as we instruct children. God here says that it should be as they said it was—they should be carried away to a distant land, and long abide among strangers; they would have ample time there to acquire instruction, and all that they would receive would be lesson after lesson of the same kind; line upon line; one judgment following another of the same kind, until the lesson of their disobedience had been fully inculcated, and they had heard the voice of the Lord, and had been brought to true repentance. ¶ *Here a little, and there a little.* So they had said (ver. 10) the lessons of God were to them by the prophets. So God says his lessons shall be to them by judgment. They shall be punished on every hand; they shall meet the judgment of the Lord everywhere. It shall not come in one sudden and overpowering burst of indignation, but it shall meet them everywhere, and shall be, as it were, dealt out to them in small portions, that it

14. Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.

15. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death,

and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come <sup>h</sup> unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.

<sup>h</sup> Eccl. 8. 8.

NEW TRANSLATION.

14. Wherefore hear ye the word of JEHOVAH, scoffing men,  
Who rule this people in Jerusalem.

15. Since ye say,

"We have made a covenant with death,

"And with Sheol have we made a treaty;

"The overflowing calamity when it passeth through shall not reach us,

"For we have made falsehood our refuge,

"And under deceit have we hid ourselves;"

may not be soon exhausted. ¶ *That they might go, &c.* That they may go into captivity, and stumble, and fall backward, and be broken by the judgments of God. God will so deal out the lessons of his judgment and wrath that as a people they shall be broken up, made prisoners, and be borne to a distant land.

14. *Wherefore, &c.* This verse commences a direct address to the scoffing and scornful nation, which is continued to the close of ver. 22. It is addressed particularly to the rulers in Jerusalem, as being the leaders in crime, and as being eminently deserving of the wrath of God. ¶ *Ye scornful men.* Ye scoffing men; ye who despise and reproach God and his message; who fancy yourselves to be secure, and who mock at the threatened judgments of the Almighty.

15. *We have made a covenant with death.* We are not to suppose that they had formally said this, but that their conduct was *as if* they had said it; they lived as securely as if they had entered into a compact with death not to destroy them, and with hell not to devour them. The figure is a very bold one, and is designed to express the extraordinary and amazing stupidity of the nation in their sins. It is most strikingly descriptive of the great mass of men. They are as little anxious about

death and hell as if they had made a compact with the King of terrors, and the Prince of darkness, not to destroy them. They are as little moved by the appeals of the gospel, by the alarms of God's Providence, by the preaching of His word, and by all the demonstrations that they must die, and that they are exposed to eternal death, as though they had proved that there was no hell, or had entered into a solemn covenant that they should be unmolested. A figure similar to this occurs in Job v. 23.

For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field;  
And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.

Comp. Hos. ii. 18. ¶ *And with hell.* Heb., *Sheol*—the land of shades, or of departed spirits. Note, ch. v. 14. It is nearly synonymous here with death. ¶ *When the overflowing scourge, &c.* There is here, in our translation, a little confusion of metaphor, since we speak usually of an overflowing *stream*, &c., and not of an overflowing *scourge*. The word *scourge*, *עֶזְרָא*, means usually a whip, a scourge, the same as *עֶזְרָא*, and then means any *punishment*, and then any calamity. See Note, ch. x. 26. Comp. Job ix. 23; v. 21. Here it means severe judgments or calamities, as *overflowing* like water, or inundating a people. ¶ *We have made lies, &c.*

16. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

† Ps. 118. 22. Matt. 21. 42. Acts. 4. 11.  
Rom. 9. 33. Eph. 2. 20.

‡ Rom. 10. 11.

NEW TRANSLATION.

16. Therefore thus saith the Lord JEHOVAH;  
Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone,  
A tried stone, a corner-stone precious,  
A foundation firmly laid;  
He that trusteth shall not flee away in alarm.

That is, they acted *as if* they had a safe refuge in falsehood. They sought refuge and security in false doctrines, and regarded themselves as safe from all that the prophets had threatened.

16. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God.* This verse is introductory to the solemn threatening which follows. Its design seems to be this. In the following verses the prophet was about to utter an awful threatening of the judgment of God that was about to come upon the nation. It might be supposed, perhaps, that the intention was completely to sweep away the nation, and destroy them—that the threatened calamity should remove every vestige of the Jewish people and of the true religion together. To meet this supposition, God says that it should not occur. Zion was founded on a rock. It should be like an edifice that was reared on a firm, well-tried corner-stone—one that could endure all the storms that should beat around it, and be unmoved. The general sentiment of the verse is, therefore, that though a tempest of calamity was about to beat upon the people for their sins, though the temple was to be destroyed, the city laid in ashes, and many of the people slain, yet it was the purpose of God that his empire on earth should not be destroyed, but should survive, and be restored. A foundation, a corner-stone was to be laid that would be unshaken and unmoved by all the assaults of the foes of God; and all who were truly resting on that should be safe. The perpetuity of his kingdom, and the safety of his true people, is,

therefore, the essential idea in this passage. That it refers to the Messiah, and is designed to show that his kingdom will be perpetual *because* it is reared on him, we shall see by an examination of the words which occur in the verse. ¶ *In Zion.* Note, ch. i. 8. Zion here is put for his empire, kingdom, or church in general on earth. To lay a corner-stone in Zion, means that his kingdom would be founded on a rock, and would be secure amidst all the storms that might beat upon it. ¶ *For a foundation.* Heb., "I am he who *founds*, or lays as a foundation a stone." ¶ *A stone.* That is, I lay a firm foundation which nothing can move; I build it on a rock, so that the storms and tempests of calamity cannot sweep it away. Comp. Matt. vii. 24. 25. The Targum renders this, "Lo! I appoint in Zion a king, a strong, mighty, and terrible king." That the passage before us has reference to the Messiah there can be no doubt. The writers of the New Testament so understood and applied it. Thus it is applied by Peter (1 Pet. ii. 6), "Wherefore, also, it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." See also my Note on Rom. ix. 33. Comp. Rom. x. 11, and Matt. xxi. 42; Luke xx. 17, 18; ii. 34; Eph. ii. 20. Such a reference also exactly suits the connexion. The stability of the kingdom of God on earth rests on the Messiah. God had determined to send him; and consequently amidst all the agitations and revolutions

17. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

17. And I will place judgment to the line,  
And justice to the plummet;  
And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of falsehood,  
And the hiding-place shall the waters overwhelm.

that could take place among his ancient people, this promise was sure, and it was certain that he would come, and that his church would be preserved. ¶ *A tried stone.* The word which is used here is applied commonly to *metals*, which are tried in the fire to test their quality. See Jer. ix. 6; Zech. xiii. 9; Ps. lxvi. 10; Job xxiii. 10. The idea is, that God would lay for a foundation not a stone whose qualities were unknown, and whose stability might be doubtful, but one whose firmness and solidity were so fully known that the foundation and the superstructure would be secure. ¶ *A precious corner stone.* The word "precious" (LXX, and 1 Pet. ii. 6, *ἐντιμον*) refers to the fact that the most valuable and firm stone would be used to sustain the corner of the edifice. The principal weight of the superstructure rests on the corners, and hence in building, the largest and firmest blocks are selected and placed there. ¶ *He that believeth.* He that *trusts* to that, or confides in that; he that believes that that foundation is firm, and that he is secure in trusting in that, shall not make haste. The great doctrine of faith in the Messiah as a ground of security and salvation, on which so much stress is laid in the New Testament, is here distinctly adverted to. The sense is, that confidence in him should keep the mind firm, and preserve him that believes in safety. ¶ *Shall not make haste.* The LXX render it, "Shall not be ashamed," *οὐ μὴ κατασχυνθῇ*. So Peter (1 Pet. ii. 6). So Paul, Rom. ix. 33. The Hebrew word *עָזַז*, from *עָזָה*, means properly to make haste; and then to

urge on; and then to be afraid, to flee. The idea is drawn from one who is alarmed, and flees to a place of safety. The specific idea here is that of a man on whose house the tempest beats, and who apprehends that the foundation is insecure, and who leaves his dwelling to seek a more safe position. The prophet says here, that the foundation on which Zion was reared would be so firm and secure, that if a man trusted to that he would have no cause of alarm, however much the storms should beat around it. The same idea essentially is presented in the version of the LXX, and by Paul and Peter, where it is rendered "shall not be ashamed," or confounded. That is, he shall have no reason to be ashamed of his confidence in the firm foundation; he shall not flee from it as a man does who puts his trust in that which fails him in the day of trial.

17. *Judgment also will I lay to the line, &c.* The sense of this is, I will judge them and punish them *according to the exact rule of law*, as an architect frames everything according to the rule which he uses. In other words, there shall be no mercy intermingled; no compassion. The *line* is that which is used by a carpenter for measuring; the plummet is an instrument also used by carpenters, and consists of a piece of lead attached to a string. It is used to obtain a perpendicular line. A carpenter works exactly according to the lines which are thus indicated, or his frame would not be properly adjusted. So God says that he would judge the people of Jerusalem according to the

18. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be <sup>1</sup> trodden down <sup>1</sup> by it.

<sup>1</sup> a treading down to it.

<sup>1</sup> Mal. 4. 3.

19. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night; and it shall be a vexation only <sup>2</sup> to understand the report.

<sup>2</sup> or, when he shall make you to understand doctrine.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

18. And your covenant with death shall be broken;  
And your league with Sheol shall not stand,  
When the overflowing calamity shall pass through.  
By it ye shall be beaten down.

19. As soon as it passes through, it shall bear you away;  
For it shall pass through morning by morning,  
Yea, by day and by night;  
And only to hear the report of it shall produce consternation.

exact rule, without any intermingling of mercy. ¶ *And the hail, &c.* See Note on ver. 2. Hail, hailstones, and floods of waters are frequent images of the divine vengeance and wrath. Ps. cv. 32; Rev. viii. 7; xi. 19; xvi. 21; Ezek. xiii. 13; xxxviii. 22; Isa. xxx. 30; xxxii. 19.

18. *And your covenant with death.* Note, ver. 15. ¶ *Shall be disannulled.* Shall be broken; shall not secure you from destruction. The word rendered "shall be disannulled" (כָּסַף, from כָּסַף), properly means to cover, overlay; then to pardon, forgive; then to make atonement, to expiate. It has the idea of blotting out, forgiving, and obliterating—because a writing in wax was obliterated or covered by passing the stylus over it. Hence also the idea of abolishing, or rendering nought, which is the idea here. ¶ *When the overflowing scourge.* Note, ver. 15. ¶ *Then ye shall be trodden down by it.* There is in this verse a great intermingling of metaphor, not less than three figures being employed to denote the calamity. There is first the *scourge*, an instrument of punishment; there is then the idea of inundating waters or floods; there is also the idea of a warrior or an invading army that treads down an enemy. All

the images are designed to denote essentially the same thing, that the judgments of God would come upon the land, and that nothing in which they had trusted would constitute a refuge.

19. *From the time that it goeth forth.* It shall not delay, or be hindered, or put back. As soon as the judgment is sent forth from God it shall come upon you. ¶ *It shall take you.* It shall seize upon you, and bear you away—like a furious driving storm of hail, or like a flood of waters. ¶ *For morning by morning.* Continually; without intermission. It shall be like floods and tempests that have no intermission; that are repeated every day, and continued every night, until everything is swept before them. ¶ *And it shall be a vexation.* It shall be an object of alarm, of agitation, of distress—מִדְּמָה, from דָּמָה, to move one's self; to tremble with alarm, or dread; to be troubled. Eccl. xii. 3; Hab. ii. 7; Dan. v. 19; vi. 27. Here it means that the calamity should be so great that it would fill the mind with horror only to hear of it. For similar expressions denoting the effect of hearing a report of the judgments of God, see 1 Sam. iii. 11; 2 Kings xxi. 12; Jer. xix. 3. ¶ *The report.* Marg., doctrine. See Note on ver. 9.

20. For the bed is shorter than that *a man* can stretch himself *on it*: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself *in it*.

21. For the LORD shall rise up

as <sup>m</sup> *in* mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as <sup>n</sup> *in* the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange <sup>o</sup> work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.

<sup>m</sup> 2 Sam. 5. 20.

<sup>n</sup> Josh. 10. 10, &c. 1 Chron. 14. 16.

<sup>o</sup> Lam. 3. 33.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

20. For the bed is too short for one to extend himself at length,  
And the covering too narrow for one to wrap himself in it.

21. For as in Mount Perazim will JEHOVAH arise;  
As in the valley of Gibeon shall he be moved with anger,  
To do his work, his strange work;  
To perform his act, his strange act.

20. *For the bed is shorter, &c.* This is evidently a proverbial saying, and means that they shall find all their places of defence insufficient to secure them. As a man who lies down to seek repose on a cramped and narrow bed finds no rest, but his weariness is augmented, so should they who had sought false refuges find that all should fail them. They seek repose, and security, as a man lies down to rest at night. But they find neither. His bed furnishes no rest; his scanty covering furnishes no comfort, and no security from the chills of the night. So it would be with those who sought refuge and protection in idols, in the promises of false prophets, and in the aid which might be obtained from Egypt. So it is with sinners. Their vain refuges shall not shield them. The bed on which they seek rest shall give them no repose; the covering with which they seek to clothe themselves shall not defend them from the wrath of God.

21. *For the LORD shall rise up.* To rise up is indicative of going forth to judgment, as when one rises from his seat to go and accomplish anything. ¶ *As in mount Perazim.* There is reference here, doubtless, to the event recorded in 2 Sam. v. 20, 21, and 1 Chron. xiv. 11, where David is said to have defeated the Philistines at Baal-Perazim. This place was near to the valley of

Rephaim (2 Sam. v. 19), and not far from Jerusalem. The word *Perazim* is from פָּרַץ, *Pârâtz*, to tear, or break forth as waters do that have been confined; and is indicative of sudden judgment, and of a complete overthrow. It was on that account given to the place where David obtained a signal and complete victory, 2 Sam. v. 20; and it is here referred to, to denote that God would come forth in a sudden manner to destroy Jerusalem and Judea. He would burst upon them like bursting waters, and sweep them away to a distant land. ¶ *As in the valley of Gibeon.* In 1 Chron. xiv. 16, it is said that after the victory of Baal-Perazim, "David smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gaza." This victory is, doubtless, referred to here, and not the victory of Joshua over the Gibeonites (Josh. x. 10), as Vitringa and others suppose. ¶ *That he may do his work, his strange work.* This is called his strange work, because it would be inflicted on his people. He had destroyed their enemies often; but now he was about to engage in the strange and unusual work of coming forth against his own people, and sweeping them away to a distant land. The work of judgment and punishment may be called the strange work of God always, inasmuch as it is not that in which he delights to engage; it is foreign to the benevolence



26. For <sup>1</sup> his God doth instruct him to discretion, *and* doth teach him.  
<sup>1</sup> or, and he bindeth it in such sort as his God doth teach him.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

26. For his God doth rightly instruct him;  
 He furnisheth him with knowledge.

or dill, an herb whose seed the ancients mixed with their bread, in order to give it a more agreeable relish. ¶ *And scatter the cummin.* כִּמְצִין. Vulg., *Cuminum*—Cummin. LXX, κύμινον—also *cummin*. The word properly denotes the annual plant, whose seeds have a bitterish warm taste with an aromatic flavor. Webster. The seeds of this plant were used as a condiment in sauces. ¶ *And cast in the principal wheat.* Marg., “The wheat in the principal place.” Vulg., “per ordinem”—in its proper order, place, proportion. So Lowth, “in due measure.” So Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, render it, “by measure;” and they suppose it means that if too much wheat be sown on the land it will grow too thick, and that the spires will crowd and suffocate each other. Our translators have rendered the word מְרִיבָה, *principal*, as if it were derived from מָרַךְ, to rule, and seem to have supposed that it denoted wheat that was peculiarly excellent, or distinguished for its good qualities. Gesenius supposes that it means “fat wheat,” from an Arabic signification of the word. Probably the word is designed to denote *quality*, and to convey the idea that wheat is the principal, or chief grain that is sown; it is that which is most valued and esteemed. ¶ *And the appointed barley.* The barley is a well-known grain. The word rendered “appointed,” מִשְׁכָּן, occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures. Castellio, Taylor, Grotius, Calvin, our translators and others, suppose that it is derived from a Hebrew word which does not now occur (מִשְׁכָּן), to designate, to mark, to seal; and that it means barley that had been put aside and *marked* as peculiarly excellent, or seed barley. In Chaldee, the word מִשְׁכָּן occurs in the sense of to seal,

to mark, to designate. Chaldee Par. 2 Kings ix. 13; Esth. v. 1; Num. xvii. 3. The LXX, who translated it κίχρον; and the Vulgate, Aquila, and Theodotion, understand the word as denoting a species of grain, the *millet*. The idea is, probably, that expressed by Grotius, and in our version—of barley that had been selected or designated as seed barley on account of its excellent quality. ¶ *And the rie.* Marg., *spelt*. The word usually denotes *spelt*—a kind of wheat now found in Flanders and Italy, called German wheat. It may, however, denote rye. ¶ *In their place?* Literally, *in the border*. LXX, “in thy borders”—ἐν τοῖς ὁρίοις σου. The idea seems to be that the spelt, or rye, was sowed in the borders of the field while the wheat was sown in the middle; or that the rye was sown in its *proper bounds*, or in the places which were adapted to it, and best fitted to promote its growth.

26. For his God doth instruct him, &c. Marg. “he bindeth it in such sort as his God doth teach him.” The more correct idea is conveyed in the text. The word מְרִיבָה, properly means, he instructs, admonishes, or teaches him. This idea that the skill of agriculture is communicated by God to the farmer is not one that is discordant to reason, or to the general teachings of the Bible. Thus the architectural and mechanical skill of Bezaleel and Aholiab, by which they were enabled to make the tabernacle, is said expressly to have been imparted to them by God. Ex. xxxi. 2—6. Thus also Noah was taught how to build the ark. Gen. vi 14—16. We are not indeed to suppose that the farmer is inspired, or that God communicates to him by special revelation where, and when, and how he shall sow his wheat, and barley, and rye, but the

27. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

27. For the dill is not beaten out with a drag,  
Nor is the wheel of the wain made to turn round on the cummin;  
But the dill is beaten out with a stick,  
And the cummin with a rod.

sense is, that God is the author of all his skill. He has endowed him with understanding, and has taught him by his Providence. It is by the study of what God teaches in the seasons, in the soil, in the results of experience and observation, that he has this skill. He teaches him also by the example, the counsel, and even by the failures of others; and all the skill that he has in agriculture is to be traced up to God.

27. *For the fitches.* Ver 25. ¶ *Are not threshed with a threshing instrument.* The word here used, פָּרָר, denotes, properly, that which is pointed or sharp, and is joined with רָכָב in Isa. xli. 15, —meaning there the threshing dray or sledge; a plank, with iron or sharp stones, that was drawn by oxen over the grain. Comp. 1 Chron. xxi. 23; 2 Sam. xxiv. 22. In the passage before us, several methods of threshing are mentioned—all of which are at the present time common in the east,—as adapted to different kinds of grain. That which is mentioned under the name of the “threshing instrument,” and “a cart wheel,” refers to an instrument which is still in use in the east. Niebuhr, in his travels in Arabia, says, (p. 299,) “In threshing their corn, the Arabians lay the sheaves down in a certain order, and then lead over them two oxen dragging a large stone.” “They use oxen, as the ancients did, to beat out their corn, by trampling on the sheaves, and dragging after them a clumsy machine. This machine is not, as in Arabia, a stone cylinder; nor a plank

with sharp stones, as in Syria; but a sort of sledge consisting of three rollers, fitted with irons which turn upon axles. A farmer chooses out a level spot in his fields, and has his corn carried thither in sheaves upon asses or dromedaries. Two oxen are then yoked in a sledge, a driver then gets upon it, and drives them backwards and forwards [or in a circle] upon the sheaves; and fresh oxen succeed in the yoke from time to time. By this operation the chaff is very much cut down; it is then winnowed, and the grain thus separated.” “This machine, Niebuhr adds, is called Nauridj. It has three rollers, which turn on three axles, and each of them is furnished with some irons which are round and flat. Two oxen were made to draw over the grain again and again the sledge above mentioned, and this was done with the greatest convenience to the driver, for he was seated in a chair fixed on the sledge.” This operation, Niebuhr says, he saw several times. ¶ *Neither is a cart wheel, &c.* This instrument of threshing is described by Bochart (Hieroz. p. i. lib. ii. c. xxxii. p. 311) as consisting of a cart or wagon fitted with wheels adapted to crush or thresh the grain. This, he says, was used by the Carthaginians who came from the vicinity of Canaan. This instrument seems to have been made with serrated wheels, perhaps almost in the form of circular saws, by which the straw was cut fine at the same time that the grain was separated from the chaff. The annexed engraving will give an idea of this mode of threshing, and of the instruments that were employed.

28. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it *with* the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it *with* his horsemen.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

28. Bread corn is crushed [with the threshing wain],  
But he will not always be thus threshing it;  
Nor will he always drive over it the wheel of his wain;  
Nor bruise it with his horses.



¶ *Turned about.* Either rolled over, or made to revolve in a circle on the heap of sheaves. ¶ *But the fitches are beaten out with a staff.* With a stick, or flail. That is, pulse in general, beans, peas, dill, cummin, &c., are easily beaten out with a stick or flail. This mode of threshing is common everywhere. It was also practised, as with us, in regard to barley and other grain where there was a small quantity, or where there was need of special haste. See Ruth ii. 17; Judges vi. 11.

28. *Bread corn.* In Hebrew, *bread* —כֹּמֶן. But the word evidently denotes the material from which bread is made, the wheat or other grain which is used for that purpose. The word is used in the same sense in ch. xxx. 23. ¶ *Is*

*bruised.* That is, is more severely bruised than the dill and the cummin; it is pressed and crushed by passing over it the sledge, or the wain with serrated wheels. The word כָּרַס, means often to be broken in pieces; to be made small or fine; to stamp, or beat small. It is, however, applied to threshing as consisting in beating or crushing. Isa. xli. 15: "Thou threshest the mountains, and beatest them small"—כָּרַס. ¶ *Because he will not ever be threshing it.* The word rendered "because," כִּי, evidently here means *although*, or *but*; and the sense is, that he will not *always* continue to thresh it; this is not his only business. It is only a *part* of his method by which he obtains grain for

29. This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, *which* is wonderful <sup>q</sup> in counsel, *and* excellent in working.

*q* Ps. 92. 5. Jer. 32. 19. Rom. 11. 33.

NEW TRANSLATION.

29. This also proceedeth from JEHOVAH of hosts;  
He makes wonderful his counsel,  
He magnifies his wisdom.

his bread. He employs various methods, and this is one. It would be needless and injurious to be *always* engaged in rolling the stone or the sledge over the grain. It would not only be a useless expense of time and labor, but it would be injurious, as it would crush and destroy the grain itself. So, the idea is, God takes various methods with his people. He does not always pursue the same course. He sometimes smites and punishes them, as the farmer beats and crushes his grain. But he does not *always* do it. He is not engaged in this method alone; nor does he pursue this constantly. It would crush and destroy them. *He therefore smites them just enough to secure, in the best manner, and to the fullest extent, their obedience; just as the farmer bruises his sheaves enough to separate all the grain from the chaff.* When this is done, he pursues other methods. Hence the various severe and heavy trials with which the people of God are afflicted. ¶ *Nor bruise it with his horsemen.* Lowth renders this "with the hoofs of his cattle," by proposing to read פָּרָס instead of פָּרָסִי, by a change of a single letter ס Samekh, instead of ש Shin. So the Syriac, the Vulgate, and so Symmachus and Theodotion. But the word פָּרָס may denote not only a *horseman*, but the *horse* itself on which one rides. See Bochart, Hieroz. p. i. l. ii. c. vi. p. 98. Comp. Habak. i. 8. Note, Isa. xxi. 7, 9; 2 Sam. i. 6. That horses were used in treading out grain there can be no doubt. They are extensively used in this country; and though in Palestine it is probable that oxen were chiefly employed (Deut. xxv. 4) in the early times, and before the introduction of horses, yet there is no improbability in supposing that in

the times subsequent to Solomon, when horses abounded, they were preferred. Their more rapid motion, and perhaps the hardness of their hoofs, makes them more valuable for this service. See Michaelis' Commentary on the Laws of Moses, vol. ii., Appendix, pp. 430—514, Ed. London, 1814. There are here, therefore, four modes of threshing mentioned, all of which are common still in the East. (1.) The threshing machine—the sledge, or clumsy machine with rollers, on which were pieces of iron or stone, and which was dragged over the grain. (2.) The cart, or wain, with serrated wheels, and which was also drawn over the grain. (3.) The flail, or the stick. And (4.) the use of cattle and horses.

29. *This also cometh, &c.* That is, this skill or wisdom in gathering his harvest; these various devices for threshing his grain come from the Lord no less than the skill with which he tills his land. See ver. 26. ¶ *Which is wonderful in counsel.* Who is so wise in his plans as to excite our admiration. ¶ *And excellent in working.* Or rather, who magnifies or makes great חֲכָמָה his wisdom. This word properly means wisdom, or understanding. Job xi. 6; xii. 16; xxvi. 3; Prov. iii. 21; viii. 14; xviii. 1. The idea of the prophet is, that God who had so wisely taught the husbandman, and who had instructed him to use such various methods in his husbandry, would also be himself wise, and would pursue similar methods with his people. He would not always pursue the same unvarying course, but would vary his dispensations as they should need, and as would best secure their holiness and happiness. We see (1.) The reason of afflictions. It is for the same reason which induces the

farmer to employ various methods on his farm. (2.) We are not to expect the same unvarying course in God's dealings with us. It would be as unreasonable as to expect that the farmer would be always ploughing, or always threshing. (3.) We are not to expect always the same *kind* of afflictions. The farmer uses different machines and modes to thresh his grain, and adapts them to the nature of the grain. So God uses different modes, and adapts them to the nature, character, and disposition of his people. One man requires one mode of discipline, and another another. At one time we need one mode of correction to call us from one kind of sin and temptation; at another another. We may lay it down as a general rule that *the divine judgments are usually in the line of our offences*; and by the nature of the judgment we may usually ascertain the nature of the sin. If a man's besetting sin is *pride*, the judgment will usually be something that is fitted to humble his pride; if it be covetousness, his property may be removed, or it may be made a curse; if it be undue attachment to children or friends, those friends may be removed. (4.) God will not crush or destroy his people. The farmer does not crush or destroy his grain. In all the various methods which he uses, he takes care not to pursue it too far, and not to injure the grain. The straw is cut fine; but the grain is not crushed or destroyed. So with God's dealings with his people. It is not to destroy them; but it is to separate the chaff from the wheat; and he will afflict them only so much as may be necessary to accomplish this. He will not be *always* bruising his people; but will in due time remit his strokes—just as the thresher does. (5.) We should therefore bear afflictions and chastisements with patience. God is good and wise. He deals with us in mercy—and the design of all his dealings with us in prosperity and adversity, in sickness and in health, in success and disappointment, is to produce the richest and most abundant fruits of righteousness, and to prepare us to enter into his kingdom above.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## ANALYSIS.

This chapter relates solely to Jerusalem—here called Ariel. See Note on ver. 1. It is not immediately connected with the preceding or the following chapters, though it is not improbable they were delivered about the same time. At what time this was delivered is not known, though it is evident that it was before the invasion by Sennacherib, and probably before the time of Hezekiah. The prophecy in the chapter consists of two parts. I. The invasion of Judea by Sennacherib, and its sudden deliverance, vs. 1—8; and, II. A reproof of the Jews for their prevalent infidelity and impiety.

I. The invasion of Judea, and the distress that would be brought upon Jerusalem, and its sudden deliverance. vs. 1—8.

- (a.) Ariel would be filled with grief and distress. vs. 1, 2.
- (b.) JEHOVAH would encamp against it and besiege it, and it would be greatly straitened and humbled. vs. 3, 4.
- (c.) Yet the besieging army would be visited with sudden calamity and destruction—represented here by thunder and tempest and flame. vs. 5, 6.
- (d.) The enemy would vanish as a dream, and all his hopes would be disappointed, as the hopes of a hungry and thirsty man are disappointed who dreams of having satisfied his hunger and thirst. vs. 7, 8.

There can be no doubt, I think, that this portion of the prophecy refers to the invasion, and the sudden and dreadful overthrow of Sennacherib; and the design of this portion of the prophecy is to give the assurance that though Jerusalem would be attacked, and in imminent danger, yet it would be suddenly delivered.

II. The second part consists of reproofs of the inhabitants of Jerusalem for their infidelity and impiety.

- (a.) They were full of error, and all classes of people were wandering

## CHAPTER XXIX.

1. Woe<sup>1</sup> to Ariel, to Ariel,<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> or, *O Ariel*, i. e., *the lion of God*.<sup>2</sup> or, *of the city*.the city *where*<sup>a</sup> David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them<sup>3</sup> kill sacrifices.<sup>a</sup> 2 Sam. 5. 9.<sup>3</sup> cut off the heads.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

VISION XXIV.—Ch. xxix. *Jerusalem*.

1. Woe to Ariel, to Ariel,  
The city where David dwelt!  
Add year to year;  
Let the festivals go round.

from God—reeling under error like a drunken man. ver. 9.

- (b.) A spirit of blindness and stupidity everywhere prevailed among the people. vs. 10—12.

- (c.) Formality and external regard for the institutions of religion prevailed, but without its life and power. ver. 13.

- (d.) They attempted to lay deep and skilful plans to hide their wickedness from *JEHOVAH*. ver. 15.

- (e.) They were unjust in their judgments; making a man an offender for a word, and perverting just judgment. ver. 21.

- (f.) For all this they shall be punished. (1.) The wisdom of their wise men should fail. ver. 14. (2.) The scorner would be consumed. ver. 20.

- (g.) There would be an overturning, and the people would be made acquainted with the law of God, and the truly pious would be comforted. vs. 16—19. Those who had erred would be reformed, and would come to the true knowledge of God. vs. 22—24.

## 1. Woe. Comp. Note, ch. xviii. 1.

¶ *To Ariel*. There can be no doubt that Jerusalem is here intended. The declaration that it was the city where David dwelt, as well as the entire scope of the prophecy, proves this. But still, it is not quite clear why the city is here called *Ariel*. The margin reads, "*O Ariel*, i. e. the lion of God." The word *Ariel*, *אֲרִיֶּל*, is evidently compounded of two words, and is usually supposed to be

made up of *אֲרִי* a lion, and *אֵל* God; and if this interpretation is the true one, it is equivalent to a strong, mighty, fierce lion—where the word "God" is used to denote greatness, in the same way as the lofty cedars of Lebanon are called cedars of God; i. e. lofty cedars. The lion is an emblem of strength; and a strong lion is an emblem of a mighty warrior or hero. 2 Sam. xxiii. 20: "He slew two lion-like (*אֲרִיִּים*) men of Moab." Also 1 Chron. xi. 22. This use of the word to denote a hero is common in Arabic. See Bochart, Hieroz. p. i. lib. iii. c. i. If this be the sense in which it is used here, then it is applied to Jerusalem under the image of a hero, and particularly as the place which was distinguished under David as the capital of a kingdom that was so celebrated for its triumphs in war. The word "*Ariel*" is, however, used in another sense in the Scriptures, to denote the altar—meaning the altar of God. Ezek. xliii. 15, 16. In the Heb. the word is *Ariel*. This name is given to the altar, Bochart supposes (Hieroz. p. i. lib. iii. c. i.), because the altar of burnt-offering *devours*, as it were, the sacrifices, as a lion devours its prey. Gesenius, however, has suggested another reason why the word is applied to the altar, since he says that the word *אֲרִי* is the same as one used in Arabic to denote a fire-hearth, and that the altar was so called because it was the place of perpetual burnt-offering. The name *Ariel* is, doubtless, given in Ezekiel to an altar; and it may be given here to Jerusalem because it was the place of

2. Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

NEW TRANSLATION.

2. Yet I will bring distress upon Ariel,  
And there shall be mourning and sorrow;  
And it shall be unto me as the hearth of the great altar.

the altar, or of the public worship of God. The Chaldee renders it, "Woe to the altar, the altar which was constructed in the city where David dwelt." It seems to me that this view better suits the connexion, and particularly ver. 2 (see Note), than to suppose that the name is given because Jerusalem was like a lion. If this be the true interpretation, then it is so called because Jerusalem was the place of the burnt-offering, and of the public worship of God; the place where the fire, as on an hearth, continually burned on the altar. ¶ *The city where David dwelt.* David took the hill of Zion from the Jebusites, and made it his dwelling-place, and the capital of his kingdom. 2 Sam. v. 6—9. Lowth renders this, "the city which David besieged." So the LXX (*ἐπολέμησε*), and so the Vulgate (*expugnavit*). The word *רָחַק* properly means, to encamp, to pitch one's tent (Gen. xxvi. 17), to station one's self. It is also used in the sense of encamping *against* any one, that is, to make war upon or to attack (see ver. 3; and Ps. xxvii. 3; 2 Sam. xii. 28); and Jerome and others have supposed that it has this meaning here in accordance with the interpretation of the LXX and the Vulgate. But the more correct idea is probably that in our translation, that David pitched his tent there; that is, that he made it his dwelling-place. ¶ *Add ye year to year.* That is, "go on year after year, suffer one year to glide on after another in the course which you are pursuing." This seems to be used ironically, and to denote that they were going on one year after another in the observance of the feasts; walking the round of external ceremonies as if all were safe, and as if the fact that David had dwelt there, and that that was the place of the great altar of worship, con-

stituted perfect security. One of the sins charged on them in this chapter was *formality* and *heartlessness* in their devotions (ver. 13), and this seems to be referred to here. ¶ *Let them kill sacrifices.* Marg., "cut off the heads." The word here used, and rendered "kill," *רָחַק*, may mean to smite; to hew; to cut down (Isa. x. 34; Job xix. 26). But it has also another signification, which better accords with this place. It denotes to make a circle, to revolve; to go round a place (Josh. vi. 3, 11); to surround (1 Kings vii. 24; Ps. xxii. 17; 2 Kings vi. 14; Ps. xvii. 9; lxxxviii. 18). The word rendered sacrifices *זִבְחֵי* may mean a sacrifice (Ps. cxviii. 27; Ex. xxiii. 18; Mal. ii. 3), but it more commonly and properly denotes feasts or festivals. Ex. x. 9; xii. 14; Lev. xxiii. 39; Deut. xvi. 10, 16; 1 Kings viii. 2, 65; 2 Chron. vii. 8, 9; Neh. viii. 14; Hos. ii. 11, 13. Here the sense is, "let the festivals go round;" that is, let them revolve as it were in a perpetual, unmeaning circle—as if all were acceptable to God, and you were safe, until the judgments due to such heartless service shall come upon you. The whole address is evidently ironical and sarcastic, and designed to denote that all their service was an unvarying repetition of heartless forms.

2. *Yet I will distress Ariel.* The reference is doubtless to the siege which God says (ver. 3) he will bring upon the guilty and formal city. ¶ *And there shall be heaviness and sorrow.* This was true of the city in the siege of Sennacherib, to which this probably refers. Though the city was delivered in a sudden and remarkable manner (see Note on vs. 7, 8), yet it was also true that it was reduced to great distress by the siege. See ch. xxxvi. xxxvii. ¶ *And it shall be unto me as Ariel.* This phrase

3. And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege <sup>b</sup> against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.
4. And thou shalt be brought <sup>c</sup>

<sup>b</sup> 2 Kings 25. 1, &c.

<sup>c</sup> Lam. 1. 9.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

3. And I will encamp against thee round about;  
And I will lay siege against thee with a mound;  
And I will raise ramparts against thee.
4. And thou shalt be humbled, and shalt speak out of the ground;  
And thy speech shall be low out of the dust;

shows that in ver. 1, Jerusalem is called "Ariel," probably because it contained the great altar, and was the place of sacrifice, and of public worship. The word *Ariel* here is to be understood in the sense of *the hearth of the great altar*; and the meaning is, "I will indeed make Jerusalem like the great altar; I will make it the burning place of wrath, where my enemies shall be consumed as if they were on the altar of burnt sacrifice." Thus in ch. xxxi. 9, it is said of JEHOVAH that his "fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem." This is a strong expression, denoting the calamity that should come upon them; and though the main reference in this whole passage is to the distress that would come upon them in the invasion of Sennacherib, yet there is no impropriety in supposing that there was presented to the mind of the prophet in vision the image of the total ruin that would come yet upon the city by the Chaldeans—when the temple, and the palaces, and the dwellings of the magnificent city of David should be in flames, and like a vast blazing altar consuming that which was laid upon it.

3. *And I will camp against thee.* That is, I will cause an army to pitch their tents there for the purpose of a siege. God regards the armies which he would employ as under his control, and speaks of them as if he would do it himself. See Note, ch. x. 5. ¶ *Round about* רָדָה. As in a circle—that is, he would encompass or encircle the city. The word here used רָדָה in ch. xxii. 18, means a *ball*; but here it evidently means a *circle*; and the sense is, that the army of

the besiegers would encompass the city. A similar form of expression occurs in regard to Jerusalem in Luke xix. 43: "For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench (χάρακα—a rampart, a mound) upon thee (σοι, against thee), and compass thee round (περικυκλώσουσι σε, encircle thee). So also Luke xxi. 20. The LXX render this, "I will encompass thee as David did;" evidently reading it as if it were רָדָה; and Lowth observes that two MSS. thus read it, and he himself adopts it. But the authority for correcting the Hebrew text in this way is not sufficient, nor is it necessary. The idea in the Hebrew text is a clear one, and evidently means that the armies of Sennacherib should encompass the city. ¶ *With a mount.* A rampart; a fortification. Or rather, perhaps, the word מַצְבָּה means a post, a military station, from יָצַב, to place, to station. The word in this form occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures, but the word מַצְבָּה occurs in 1 Sam. xiii. 23; xiv. 1, 4; 2 Sam. xxiii. 14, in the sense of a military post, or garrison. ¶ *I will raise forts.* Walls, ramparts, citadels. It should be subjected to the regular process of a siege. The LXX read πύργους, *towers*; and so also two MSS., by a change in a single letter, ρ instead of γ. But there is no necessity for altering the Hebrew text. Lowth prefers the reading of the LXX.

4. *And shalt speak out of the ground,* &c. See Note on ch. viii. 19. The sense here is, that Jerusalem that had been accustomed to pride itself on its strength; that had boasted of its being



down, *and* shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall <sup>1</sup> whisper out of the dust.

5. Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small

<sup>1</sup> *peep, or chirp.*

dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones *shall be* as chaff <sup>d</sup> that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant <sup>e</sup> suddenly.

6. Thou <sup>f</sup> shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

<sup>d</sup> Job 21. 18.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Thes. 5. 3.

<sup>f</sup> *ch. i.*

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

And thy voice shall be like a necromancer out of the ground,  
And thy words shall be shrill out of the dust.

5. But the multitude of thy foreigners shall be like fine dust,

The multitude of the oppressors like flying chaff;

Yea, it shall be instantaneous, sudden.

6. From JEHOVAH of hosts shalt thou [the Assyrian] be visited

With thunder, and with earthquake, and with great noise;

With storm and tempest, and with a flame of devouring fire.

the place of the worship of God, and of piety; should be greatly humbled and subdued. Its loud and lofty tone should be changed. It would use the suppressed language of fear and alarm, as if it spoke from the dust, or in a shrill small voice, like the pretended conversers with the dead. ¶ *And thy speech shall whisper*, &c. Marg., *peep or chirp*. See Note, ch. viii. 19.

5. *Moreover.* And. These verses (5, 7, 8) contain a beautiful description of the destruction of the army of Sennacherib. Though they had laid the plan of a regular siege; though the city, in itself, would not be able to hold out against them, and all was consternation and alarm, and conscious imbecility within; yet in an instant the siege would be raised, and the advancing hosts of the Assyrians would all be gone. ¶ *The multitude of thy strangers.* The multitude of the strangers that shall besiege thee; called "*thy* strangers," because they besieged, or oppressed thee. The word "strangers" here, as elsewhere, means *foreigners*. See Note, ch. i. 7; comp. ch. ii. 6; v. 17; xiv. 1; xxv. 2, 5; xxix. 5; lx. 10. ¶ *Shall be like small dust.* Light, fine dust, that is easily dis-

sipated by the wind. ¶ *Of the terrible ones.* Of the invading, besieging army, that is so much the object of dread. ¶ *As chaff that passeth away.* See Note, ch. xvii. 13. This image of chaff driven before the wind, to denote the sudden and entire discomfiture of enemies, is common in the Scriptures. See Job xxi. 18; Ps. i. 4; xxxv. 5; Hos. xiii. 3. ¶ *Yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.* The forces of Sennacherib were destroyed in a single night by the angel of the Lord (Isa. xxxvii. 36. Notes, ch. x. 12, 28—34), and the siege of Jerusalem was of course immediately raised.

6. *Thou shalt be visited.* This seems to be an address to the mighty army of the Assyrian. Such transitions are not uncommon in the writings of Isaiah. He had been describing the sudden deliverance which the city of Jerusalem would experience; his eye seems to have been directed in vision to the hosts of Sennacherib, and to their sudden dispersion and destruction (ver. 5), and, by a sudden, but not unnatural transition, he turns and addresses the army itself, with the assurance that it should be visited and punished. Comp.

7. And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all <sup>s</sup> that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream <sup>a</sup> of a night vision.

8. It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, be-  
g ch. 41. 11, 12.      A ch. 37. 36.

hold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

7. And as in a dream, in a vision of the night,  
So shall it be with the multitude of all the nations  
That fight against Ariel;  
And all that oppose her and her ramparts,  
And all that distress her.

8. And it shall be as when an hungry man dreameth and lo! he eats,  
But awakes, and his soul is still unsatisfied;  
And as a thirsty man dreameth, and lo! he drinks,  
And awakes, and lo! he is still faint,  
And his soul is still craving;—  
So shall it be with the multitude of all the nations  
Which war against Mount Zion.

ch. xxx. 30. ¶ *With thunder, &c.* The army of the Assyrian was cut off by an angel sent forth from God, ch. xxxvii. 36. It is possible that all the things here referred to may have been employed in the destruction of the Assyrian host, though they are not particularly specified in the history. But it is not absolutely necessary to understand this verse in this manner. The image of thunder, and earthquake, and lightning, is an impressive representation of sudden and awful judgment in any manner. The sense is, that they should be suddenly destroyed by the direct visitation of God. See ch. ix. 5; xxvi. 11. ¶ *And the flame of devouring fire.* Lightning, that seems to devour, or that suddenly consumes.

7. *And the multitude of all the nations.* The Assyrians, and all their allied hosts. ¶ *And her munition.* Her fortresses, castles, places of strength, Ezek. xix. 9; Eccl. ix. 14; 2 Sam. v. 7. ¶ *Shall be as a dream of a night vision.* In a dream we seem to see the objects of which we think as really as when

awake, and hence they are called *visions, and visions of the night.* Gen. xlv. 2; Job iv. 13; vii. 14; Dan. ii. 28; iv. 5; vii. 1, 7, 13, 15. The specific idea which the prophet here presents is not that of the *suddenness* with which objects seen in a dream appear, and then vanish, but it is that which is presented in ver. 8, of one who is hungry, or thirsty, and dreams of eating and drinking, but who awakes and is hungry and thirsty still. So it was with the Assyrian. He had set his heart on the wealth of Jerusalem. He had earnestly desired to possess that city—as a hungry man desires to satisfy the cravings of his appetite. But it would be like the vision of the night. He would be disappointed; and on that fatal morning on which he should awake from his fond dream (ch. xxxvii. 36), he would find all his hopes dissipated, and the long-cherished desire of his soul unsatisfied still.

8. *It shall even be, &c.* This is a most striking figure, representing the earnest desire which the Assyrian had

9. Stay yourselves, and won- are drunken, <sup>1</sup> but not with wine; der; <sup>1</sup> cry ye out, and cry: they they stagger, but not with strong drink.

<sup>1</sup> or, take your pleasure and riot.

ch. 51. 21.

#### NEW TRANSLATION

9. Stand astonished, and wonder!  
Stare, and be blinded with amazement!  
They are drunken—but not with wine;  
They stagger—but not with strong drink.

to possess the city of Jerusalem, and his utter disappointment. The comparison is elegant and beautiful in the highest degree. It is wrought up to great perfection; and is perfectly suited to illustrate the object in view. The same image substantially is found in the classic writers, and this, says Lowth, may for beauty and ingenuity fairly come in competition with one of the most elegant of Virgil (greatly improved from Homer, *Iliad*. xxii. 119), where he has applied to a different purpose, but not so happily, the same image of the ineffectual workings of the imagination in a dream.

"Ac veluti in somnis oculos ubi languida  
pressit  
Nocte quies, nequicquam avidos extendere  
cursus  
Velle videmur, et in mediis conatibus ægri  
Succidimus; non lingua valet, non corpore  
notæ  
Sufficiunt vires; nec vox, nec verba sequun-  
tur."

*Æneid*. xii. 908.

"And as when slumber seals the closing sight,  
The sick wild fancy labors in the night;  
Some dreadful visionary foe we shun,  
With airy strides, but strive in vain to run;  
In vain our baffled limbs their powers essay;  
We faint, we struggle, sink and fall away;  
Drained of our strength we neither fight nor  
fly,  
And on the tongue the struggling accents  
die."

PITT.

See also Lucretius (iv. 10—91), who also expresses the same image as Isaiah. As the simile of the prophet is drawn from nature, an extract which describes the actual occurrence of such a circumstance will be agreeable. "The scarcity of water," says Park, "was greater here at Bubaker than at Be-nown. Day and night the wells were crowded with cattle lowing and fighting with each other to come at the

trough. Excessive thirst made many of them furious: others being too weak to contend for the water, endeavored to quench their thirst by devouring the black mud from the gutters near the wells; which they did with great avidity, though it was commonly fatal to them. This great scarcity of water was felt by all the people of the camp, and by none more than myself. I begged water from the negro slaves that attended the camp; but with very indifferent success; for though I let no opportunity slip, and was very urgent in my solicitations both to the Moors and to the negroes, I was but ill supplied, and frequently passed the night in the situation of Tantalus. No sooner had I shut my eyes, than fancy would convey me to the streams and rivers of my native land; there, as I wandered along the verdant bank, I surveyed the clear stream with transport, and hastened to swallow the delightful draught; but alas! disappointment awakened me, and I found myself a lonely captive, perishing of thirst amid the wilds of Africa." *Travels in Africa*.

9. *Stay yourselves*. Thus far the prophet had given a description of the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, and of his sudden overthrow. He now turns to the Jews, and reproves their stupidity, formality, and hypocrisy; and the remainder of the chapter is occupied with a statement of the prevalence of these sins, and of the judgments that must follow, and of the fact that there should yet be an extensive reformation and turning to the Lord. The word rendered "stay yourselves," *התעוררו*, means, properly, to linger, tarry, delay. *Gen*. xix. 16; *xliii*. 10; *2 Sam*. xv. 28.

10. For <sup>k</sup> the LORD hath poured the prophets and your <sup>l</sup> rulers, out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes:

<sup>k</sup> Rom. 11. 8.

<sup>l</sup> heads.

<sup>l</sup> 1 Sam. 9. 9.

NEW TRANSLATION.

10. For JEHOVAH hath poured out upon you the spirit of profound sleep; And he hath closed up your eyes:  
The prophets, and the rulers—  
The seers hath he blinded.

Here it seems to denote that state of mind in which, as we express it, any one is *fixed in astonishment*; in which one stops, and stares at some strange and unexpected occurrence. The object of amazement which the prophet proceeds to present, and which he supposes would excite astonishment, was the stupidity, dulness, and hypocrisy of a people who had been so signally favored. Comp. Habak. i. 5. ¶ *Cry ye out, and cry.* There is in the original here a paronomasia which cannot be conveyed in a translation. The word which is used here, ~~וַיִּסְתֵּם~~, is one form of the verb ~~סָתַם~~, which means, usually, to make smooth, rub, spread over, hence to be spread over in the Hithpael form which is here used; and hence perhaps *to be closed*, and is applied to the eyes (Isa. vi. 10, Note), to denote blindness, *as if* they were overspread with something by reason of which they could not see. Here it probably means, “be ye dazzled and blinded;” that is, be ye astonished, as in the former part of the verse. The idea seems to be that of some object of sudden astonishment that stupifies the mind, that dims the sight, and takes away all the powers of vision. The word is used in the same sense in ch. xxxii. 3. Comp. ch. xxxv. 5; xlii. 19. Probably the idea here would be well expressed by our word *stare*, “stare and look with a stupid surprise;” denoting the attitude and condition of a man who is amazed and overwhelmed at some remarkable and unlooked for spectacle. ¶ *They are drunken, but not with wine.* The people of Jerusalem. They reel and stagger, but the cause is not that

they are drunken with wine. It is a moral and spiritual intoxication and reeling. They err in their doctrines and practice; and as a drunken man that sees nothing clearly or correctly, and as he cannot walk steadily, so it is with them. They have perverted all doctrines; they err in their views of God and his truth, and they are irregular and corrupt in their conduct.

10. *For the LORD hath poured out upon you.* The word rendered “hath poured out,” ~~יָצַק~~, is usually referred to the act of pouring out a libation, or drink-offering in worship. Ex. xxx. 9; Hos. ix. 4; Isa. xxx. 1. Here it means that JEHOVAH had sent it upon them; that he had, as it were, *drenched them* (LXX ~~πεπότικεν~~) with a spirit of stupefaction. This is traced to God in accordance with the usual custom in the Bible by which his providential agency is recognised in all events. See Notes, ch. vi. 9, 10. Comp. Rom. xi. 8, where this passage is quoted from the LXX, and is applied to the Jews in the time of the apostle Paul. See my Note on that place. ¶ *The spirit of deep sleep.* The word rendered “deep sleep,” is the same as is used in Gen. ii. 21, to denote the sleep that God brought on Adam; and in Gen. xv. 12, to denote the deep sleep that fell on Abraham, and when an horror of great darkness fell upon him; and in 1 Sam. xxvi. 12, to denote the deep sleep that came upon Saul when David approached and took away the spear and the cruise of water from his bolster. The word properly denotes sound repose. Here it means spiritual sluggishness, inactivity, stupidity, that prevailed everywhere among the people

11. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a <sup>1</sup> book that is sealed, <sup>m</sup> which *men* deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

12. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying,

Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

13. Wherefore the LORD said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, <sup>n</sup> and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of <sup>o</sup> men:

<sup>1</sup> or, *letter*.    <sup>m</sup> Dan. 12. 4, 9.    Rev. 5. 1—9.

<sup>n</sup> Ezek. 33. 31.    Matt. 15. 6—9  
<sup>o</sup> Col. 2. 22.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

11. So that the vision of all is as the words of a book sealed up,  
Which is given to one who is skilled in reading,  
Saying "Read this, I pray thee;"

And he shall say, "I cannot read it for it is sealed up:"

12. And the book is given to one who cannot read,

Saying "Read this, I pray thee;"

And he shall say, "I cannot read."

13. Wherefore JEHOVAH saith,

Forasmuch as this people draw near to me with their mouth,

And with their lips do honor me,

While their heart is far from me,

And their worship of me is taught by the commandment of men,

in regard to the things of religion.

¶ *The seers.* Those that see visions; another name for the prophets. ¶ *Hath he covered.* That is, he has covered their eyes; or they are all blind.

11. *And the vision of all.* The vision of all the prophets; that is, all the revelations which God has made to you. See Note, ch. i. 1. The prophet refers not only to his own communications, but to those of his contemporaries, and of all who had gone before him. The sense is, that although they had the communications which God had made to them, yet they did not understand them. They were as ignorant of their true nature as a man who can read is of the contents of a book that is sealed up, or as a man who cannot read is of the contents of a book that is handed to him. ¶ *As the words of a book.* Marg. *Letter.* The word *רש* may mean either. It properly means anything which is *written*, any writing (Dan. i. 4; Jer. xxxii. 12; Deut. xxiv. 1, 3); but commonly applied to a book. Ex.

xvii. 14; Josh. i. 8; viii. 34; Ps. xl. 8.

¶ *That is sealed.* See Note on ch. viii. 16.

12. *And the book is delivered, &c.* That is, they are just as ignorant of the true nature and meaning of the revelations of God as a man is of the contents of a book who is utterly unable to read.

13. *Wherefore the LORD said.* This verse, with the following, is designed to denounce the divine judgment on their formality of worship. They kept up the forms of religion, but they withheld the affections of their hearts from God; and he therefore says that he will proceed to inflict on them exemplary and deserved punishment. ¶ *This people draw near me.* That is, in the temple, and in the forms of external devotion. ¶ *With their mouth.* In prayer. ¶ *And with their lips do honor me.* They professedly celebrate my praise, and acknowledge me in the forms of devotion. ¶ *But have removed their heart, &c.* Have withheld the affections of their hearts. ¶ *And their fear toward me.*

14. Therefore, behold, I will <sup>1</sup> proceed to do a marvellous <sup>p</sup> work among this people, *even* a marvellous work and a wonder: for <sup>q</sup> the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid.

15. Woe unto them that seek deep to hide <sup>r</sup> their counsel from

the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who <sup>s</sup> seeth us? and who knoweth us?

16. Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for <sup>t</sup> shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

<sup>q</sup> Jer. 49. 7. Ob. 8. <sup>p</sup> Hab. 1. 5.  
<sup>r</sup> Ps. 139. 7, &c. <sup>t</sup> Cor. 1. 19.  
ch. 30. 1.

<sup>s</sup> Ps. 94. 7. <sup>t</sup> ch. 45. 9. Rom. 9. 20.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

14. Therefore, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, A marvellous work and a wonder;—

The wisdom of their wise men shall perish,  
And the understanding of the prudent shall disappear.

15. Woe unto them that seek to hide deep their purposes from JEHOVAH,  
Whose deeds are in the dark,

And they say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?"

16. Your perverseness is as if the potter should be esteemed as the clay!  
For shall the work say to its maker, He hath not made me?

And shall the thing formed say of its former, He hath no understanding?

The worship of God is often represented as *fear*, (Job xxviii. 28; Ps. xix. 9; xxxiv. 11; Prov. i. 7,) and the fear toward him here denotes their worship of him. Their views, instead of having been derived from the Scriptures, were drawn from the views and feelings of men. Our Saviour referred to this passage, and applied it to the hypocrites of his own time. Matt. xv. 8, 9. The latter part of it is, however, not quoted literally from the Hebrew nor from the LXX, but retaining the sense: "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." He quoted it as strikingly descriptive of the people when he lived, not as saying that Isaiah referred directly to the times of the Messiah, but that the account which he had given of that people in his own time was equally applicable to the people in his time.

14. *I will proceed to do.* Heb., "I will add to do," &c.; that is, I will do it. ¶ *For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish.* I will bring calamity upon them, which shall baffle all the skill and

wisdom of their wise men. ¶ *Shall be hid.* That is, shall not appear; shall vanish. It shall not be sufficient to prevent the calamities that shall come upon the nation.

15. *Woe unto them that seek deep, &c.* That is, who attempt to conceal their *real* intentions under a plausible exterior, and correct outward deportment. This is most strikingly descriptive of the character of a hypocrite who seeks effectually to conceal his plans and his purposes from the eyes of men, and of God. His external conduct is fair; his observance of the duties of religion exemplary; his attendance on the means of grace and the worship of God regular; his professions loud and constant, but the whole design is to *conceal* his real sentiments, and to accomplish some sinister and wicked purpose by it. ¶ *From the LORD.* This proves that the design of the hypocrite is not always to attempt to deceive his fellow-men; but that he also aims to deceive God.

16. *Surely your turning of things upside down.* Your perversion of all things

17. *Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be as a forest? turned "into a fruitful field, and*

≈ ch. 32. 15. Matt. 19. 30.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

17. Shall it not be in a very little time,  
And Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field,  
And the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest?

—of doctrines, of truth, &c. They had no just views of truth. They had false and hollow views of worship. They deemed mere formality to be all that was required. They attempted to conceal their plans even from JEHOVAH; and everything in the opinions and practice of the nation had become perverted and erroneous. There has been much diversity in rendering this phrase. Luther renders it, "O how perverse ye are!" Lowth renders it,

Perverse as ye are! shall the potter be esteemed as the clay?

Rosenmüller also accords with this interpretation, and renders it, "O your perversity," &c. The sense of the passage seems to be this: "You are perverse in your views and conduct. Your *changing of things* is just as absurd as it would be for the thing formed to say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? It is as absurd for you to find fault with the government of God as it would be for the clay to complain of a want of skill in the potter. You complain of God's laws, and worship him according to the commandments of men. You complain of God's requirements, and offer to him the service of the mouth and the lip, and withhold the heart. You suppose that God does not see you, and do your deeds in darkness. All this supposes that God is destitute of wisdom and cannot see what is done. And it is just as absurd as it would be in the clay to complain that the potter who fashions it has no skill, and no understanding." ¶ *Shall be esteemed, &c.* Is to be regarded just as if the potter's clay should say to the potter, he has no skill. The *literal* translation of this passage I conceive would be, "Your perverseness is as if the potter should

be esteemed as the clay;" that is, as if he had no more understanding and skill than the clay; or as if he were no more qualified to form anything than the clay itself. ¶ *For shall the work, &c.* This passage has been quoted by the apostle Paul, (Rom. ix. 20, 21.) in order to show the right which God has to do with his creatures as shall seem good in his sight, and the impropriety of complaining of his distinguishing mercy in choosing to life those whom he pleases. The sense of the passage is, that it would be absurd for that which is made to complain of the maker as having no intelligence, and no right to make it as he does. It would be absurd in the piece of pottery to complain of the potter as if he had no skill; and equally absurd in man to complain of God, or to regard him as destitute of wisdom.

17. *Is it not yet a very little while.* The idea here is, "You Jews have greatly perverted things in Jerusalem. The time is at hand when there shall be other overturnings—when the wicked shall be cut off, and when there shall be poured out upon the nation such judgments that the deaf shall hear, and the blind shall see, and when those who have erred in spirit shall come to understanding," vers. 18–24. ¶ *And Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field.* This is evidently a proverbial expression, denoting any great revolution of things. It is probable that in the times of Isaiah the whole chain of Lebanon was uncultivated, as the word is evidently here used in opposition to a fruitful field, and Lebanon is regarded as unproductive. See Note on ch. ii. 13. The word which is rendered "fruitful field," *צֶמֶת*, *Carmel*, properly denotes a *fruitful field*, or a finely cultivated

18. And <sup>z</sup> in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

r ch. 35. 5. Luke 7. 22.

19. The meek <sup>y</sup> also shall <sup>i</sup> increase *their* joy in the LORD, and the poor <sup>z</sup> among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

y ch. 61. 1. <sup>i</sup> add. z James 2. 5.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

18. And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book,  
And the eyes of the blind shall see—  
The darkness and obscurity being removed.  
19. The afflicted also shall increase their joy in JEHOVAH,  
And the poor shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

country. See Isa. x. 18. It is also applied to a celebrated mountain or promontory on the Mediterranean Sea, on the southern boundary of the tribe of Asher. It runs north-west of the plain of Esdraelon, and ends in a promontory or cape, and forms the bay of Acco. The mountain or promontory is about 1500 feet high; and abounds in caves or grottoes, and was celebrated as being the residence of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. See 1 Kings xviii. 19, 42; 2 Kings ii. 25; iv. 25; xix. 23. Comp. Note, Isa. xxxv. 2. More than a thousand caves are said to exist on the west side of the mountain, which it is said were formerly inhabited by monks. But the word here is to be taken, doubtless, as it is in our translation, as denoting a fertile, well-cultivated field. Lebanon, that is now barren and uncultivated, shall soon become a fertile, well-cultivated, and productive field. That is, there shall be changes among the Jews that shall be as great as if Lebanon should become an extensively cultivated region, abounding in fruits, and vines, and harvests. The idea is this: "The nation is now perverse and sinful, formal and hypocritical. They produce few fruits of righteousness. But the time of reformation and change shall come. The wicked shall be reformed; the number of the pious shall be increased; and the pure worship of God shall succeed a time of general formality and hypocrisy." The prophet does not say *when* this should be. He simply affirms that it should be before a great

while—and it may, perhaps, be referred to the times succeeding the captivity. Comp. ch. xxxii. 15; xxxv. 1—6. ¶ *And the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest?* That is, there shall be great changes in the nation, or as if a well-cultivated field should be allowed to lie waste, and grow up into a forest. Perhaps it means, that that which was then apparently flourishing should be overthrown, and the land should lie waste. Those who were apparently in prosperity should be humbled and punished. The effect of this revolution is stated in the following verses.

18. *Shall the deaf hear the words of the book.* They who now have the law and do not understand it; the people who seem to be deaf to all that God says; shall hear and understand it. ¶ *Shall see out of obscurity, &c.* That is, the darkness being removed, they shall see clearly the truth of God, and discern and love its beauty. Their eyes are now blinded, but then they shall see clearly.

19. *The meek.* The word *meek* usually refers to those who are patient and mild in the reception of injuries, but the Hebrew word used here, נָקִי, means, properly, the oppressed, the afflicted, the unhappy, Ps. ix. 13; x. 12, 17; Isa. xi. 4; Prov. iii. 34. It involves, usually, the idea of humility or virtuous suffering. Comp. Ps. xxv. 9; xxxvii. 11; lxix. 33. Here it may denote the pious of the land who were oppressed, and subjected to trials.



20. For the terrible one is brought to nought, <sup>a</sup> and the scorner is consumed, and all that <sup>b</sup> for iniquity are cut off:

<sup>a</sup> ch. 51. 13. Rev. 12. 10.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 64. 6. Jer. 20. 10.

21. That make a man an offender for a word, and <sup>c</sup> lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

<sup>c</sup> Amos 5. 10, 12.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

20. For the oppressor has disappeared, and the scoffer is no more, And they that were watchful for iniquity are cut off;—

21. They who condemned the poor man in his cause, And laid snares for him that pleaded in the gate, And that turned aside the just with a decision that is null and void.

¶ *Shall increase.* Marg., as in the Heb., *add.* It means, that they should greatly rejoice in the Lord. They should see the evidence of the fulfilment of his predictions; they should see the oppressors punished (vs. 20, 21); and they should see **JEHOVAH** coming forth to be their protector and defender, (vs. 22—24.) ¶ *And the poor among men.* The poor men, or the needy. Doubtless the idea is that of the pious poor; those who feared God, and who had been subjected to the trials of oppression and poverty.

20. *For the terrible one.* The violent one, **וְרָעָא**, the oppressor; he who had exercised cruelty over them. This, I suppose, refers to the haughty among the Jews themselves; they who held offices of power, and who abused them to oppress the poor and needy. ¶ *And the scorner.* See ch. xxviii. 14, 22. ¶ *Is consumed.* Shall be entirely destroyed. ¶ *And all that watch for iniquity.* That is, who anxiously seek for opportunities to commit iniquity.

21. *That make a man an offender.* Literally, “who cause a man to sin,” **וְיַחַדְּוֹ**, that is, who hold a man to be guilty, or a criminal. Lowth renders this, singularly enough,

Who bewildered the poor man in speaking.

Grotius supposes it means, “Who on account of the word of God, that is the true prophecy, treat men as guilty of crime.” Calvin supposes it means, who bear with impatience the reproofs and

denunciation of the prophets, and who closely observe them, and endeavor to pervert and distort their meaning. Hence, he supposes, they proposed artful and captious questions by which they might ensnare them. Others suppose it refers to the fact that they led men into sin by their new doctrines and false views. The connexion, however, seems to require that it should be understood of judicial proceedings, or of those who administer justice; and the sense is probably correctly expressed by Noyes,

Who condemned the poor man in his cause.

This interpretation is also that which is proposed by Rosenmüller and Gesenius. According to the interpretation above suggested, the word rendered, “who make an offender,” means the same as who holds one guilty—that is, condemns.

¶ *A man.* **אָדָם**. It is well known that this word stands in contradistinction to **עָשִׂיר**, and denotes usually a poor man, a man in humble life in opposition to one who is rich, or of more elevated rank. This is probably the sense here, and the meaning is, that they condemned the poor man, that is, that they were partial in their judgments. ¶ *For a word.*

In a word; denoting the same as a cause that is tried before a court of justice. So Ex. xviii. 16, “When they have a matter, (**דָּבָר**, a word,) they come unto me,” &c. So Ex. xviii. 22, “And it shall be, that every great matter (Heb., every great word) that they shall

22. Therefore thus saith the <sup>d</sup> Lord, who redeemed Abraham, neither shall his face now wax concerning the house of Jacob, pale.

d Josh. 24. 3.

e ch. 54. 4.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

22. Therefore thus saith JEHOVAH concerning the house of Jacob,  
He who redeemed Abraham;  
Jacob shall no more be ashamed,  
No more shall his face grow pale.

bring unto me." So Ex. xxii. 8, (in the English version 9). "For all manner of trespass," Heb., for every word of trespass; i. e., for every suit concerning a breach of trust. So also Ex. xxiv. 14, "If any man have any matters to do," (Heb., "any words,") that is, if any one has a lawsuit. The word here also probably refers to a lawsuit; and the phrase denotes those who condemn the poor man unjustly in his suit. ¶ *And lay a snare for him, &c.* To lay a snare is to devise a plan to deceive, or get into their possession; as birds are caught in snares that are concealed from them. ¶ *That reproveth.* Or rather, that contended or pleaded; that is, that had a cause. The word, *נָקַד*, means, often, to contend with any one; to strive; to seek to confute; to attempt to defend or justify, as in a court of law. Job xiii. 15; xix. 5; xvi. 21; xxii. 4. It is also applied to deciding a case in law, or pronouncing a decision. Isa. xi. 3, 4; Gen. xxxi. 37; Job ix. 33. Here it means for one who has brought a suit, or who is engaged in a legal cause. ¶ *In the gate.* Gates of cities being public, and places of concourse, were usually resorted to for transacting business; and courts were usually held in them. Deut. xvii. 5, 8; xxi. 19; xxii. 15; xxv. 6, 7; Ruth iv. 1; Gen. xxiii. 10, 18. The sense is, they endeavored to pervert justice, and to bring the man who had a cause before them completely within their power, so that they might manage or use him for their own purposes, at the same time that they seemed to be deciding the cause justly. ¶ *And turn aside the just.* The man who has a just or righteous cause. ¶ *For a*

thing of nought. Or a decision which is empty, vain, (*בְּהִיּוֹת*), and which should be regarded as null and void.

22. *Therefore.* In consequence of the happy change which shall take place in the nation when the oppressor shall be removed, (vs. 20, 21,) and when the poor and the meek shall rejoice, (ver. 19,) and the ignorant shall be instructed, (ver. 18,) Jacob shall not be ashamed of his descendants as he was before, nor have cause to blush in regard to his posterity. ¶ *Who redeemed Abraham.* That is, who brought him out of a land of idolators, and rescued him from the abominations of idolatry. The word *redeem* here, *פָּדָה*, *Pādāh*, properly denotes to ransom, i. e., to redeem a captive, or a prisoner with a price paid. Ex. xiii. 13; xxxiv. 20. But it is also used as meaning to deliver in general, without reference to a price, to free in any manner, to recover, &c. Job v. 20; 1 Kings i. 29; 2 Sam. iv. 9; Ps. lxxi. 23. It is used in this general sense here; and means, that JEHOVAH had rescued Abraham from the evils of idolatry, and made him his friend. The connexion, also, would seem to imply that there was a reference had to the promise which was made to Abraham that he should have a numerous posterity. See ver. 23. ¶ *Jacob shall not now be ashamed.* This is a poetical introduction of Jacob as the ancestor of the Jewish people, as if the venerable patriarch were looking upon his children. Their deportment had been such as would suffuse a father's cheeks with shame; henceforward in the reformation that should occur he

23. But when he seeth his children, the work <sup>f</sup> of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and

*f* ch. 60. 21. Eph. 2. 10.

shall fear the God of Israel.

24. They <sup>g</sup> also that erred in spirit shall <sup>h</sup> come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

*g* 1 Cor. 6. 11.

<sup>h</sup> *know understanding.*

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

23. But he shall see his children, the work of my hands,  
In the midst of him sanctify my name,  
And sanctify the Holy One of Jacob,  
And reverence the God of Israel.
24. They also who erred in spirit shall gain knowledge;  
And they that murmured shall attend to instruction.

should *not* be ashamed of them, but should look on them with approbation. ¶ *Neither shall his face now wax pale.* The face usually becomes pale with fear; but it may also occur that this shall follow from any strong emotion. *Disappointment* may produce paleness as well as fear; and perhaps the idea may be, that the face of Jacob should no more become pallid, *as if* he had been disappointed in regard to the hopes which he had cherished of his sons.

23. *But when he seeth his children.* The sense is, "he shall not be ashamed of his sons, for he shall see them henceforward walking in the ways of piety and virtue." ¶ *The work of mine hands.* That is, this change (vs. 17—19) by which the nation shall be reformed, will be produced by the agency of God himself. The sentiment is in accordance with the doctrines of the Scripture everywhere, that the human heart is changed, and men are recovered from sin by the agency of God alone. Comp. Isa. lx. 21; Eph. ii. 10. ¶ *In the midst of him.* In the midst of his land, or his people. The name Jacob is often employed to denote all his posterity, or the whole nation of the Jews.

24. *They also that erred in spirit.* See vs. 9, 10. ¶ *Shall learn doctrine.* When this should occur the prophet does not state. It may be intended to denote the times of Hezekiah; or the times subsequent to the captivity; or possibly it may refer to the times under the Messiah. All that the prophet teaches is,

that at some future period in the history of the Jews there would be such a reform that they should be regarded as the worthy descendants of the pious patriarch Jacob.

#### CHAPTER XXX.

##### ANALYSIS.

It is probable that the prophecy in this chapter was delivered about the same time as that in the previous chapter, and on the same general occasion. It is evident that it was delivered in the time of Hezekiah, and when the nation of the Jews was alarmed by an apprehended invasion of the king of Assyria. Hezekiah had revolted from the king of Assyria (2 Kings xviii. 7); and it is probable that many of the leaders of the Jews began to be alarmed at the prospect that their land would be invaded by the enraged Assyrian, especially as it was known that it was the intention of Sennacherib to make war on Egypt, and that he would probably take Judea in his way. In such circumstances it was natural that they should propose an alliance with the Egyptians, and that they should seek to unite their forces with theirs to repel the common danger. Instead of looking to God, and relying on his aid, they had probably entered into such an alliance, offensive and defensive, ch. xxxi. 1. The design of this chapter is to reprove them for it, and for depending on Egypt rather than on God. To see the impropriety of such a

## CHAPTER XXX.

1. Woe <sup>a</sup> to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take

<sup>a</sup> Dent. 29, 19, 20.

counsel, but not of me; and that cover <sup>b</sup> with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add <sup>c</sup> sin to sin:

<sup>b</sup> ch. 29, 15.

<sup>c</sup> Rom. 2, 5.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

VISION XXV.—Ch. xxx. *The alliance with Egypt.*

1. Woe to the rebellious children, saith JEHOVAH,  
Who form counsels, but not from me,  
And who enter into compacts, but not by my spirit,  
That they may add sin to sin.

league, it is to be remembered that God had promised to be the protector of his people, and that he had prohibited alliances with the surrounding nations; that it was a leading part of the Jewish policy, as instituted by Moses, to keep them a distinct and independent people, and that special care had been exercised to keep them from returning to the customs, or depending on the aid of the Egyptians. It is probable, however, that at the time when Sennacherib commenced his expedition, an alliance had been formed between the Jews and the Egyptians (Isa. xxxvi. 6—9; 2 Kings xviii. 21). This alliance had been formed unquestionably contrary to the solemn counsel and warning of Isaiah (Isa. xx.); and he now reproves them for it, and endeavors to recal them again to confidence in God.

The following is a summary of the contents of the chapter. I. The prophet reproves them, or denounces "woe" on them for seeking the aid of Egypt, vs. 1, 2. II. He assures them that their confidence is vain, and that Egypt would be unable to help them, and that the effect would be, that they would yet be ashamed themselves of the alliance, vs. 3—7. III. The prophet is directed to make a solemn record that the prevailing character of the Jews was that of a rebellious people, vs. 8—11. IV. The judgment of God is denounced against them for forming this alliance, under the image of a wall that is ready to fall on them, and destroy them, vs. 12—14. V. The prophet tells them the true way

in which they may have peace and confidence, and that is, by putting their trust in God, and assures them that God waits to protect them, and to become their defender, vs. 15—18. VI. God would yet bless them. The people would see the vanity of their reliance on Egypt; would turn unto God, and their turning to him should be attended with most rich and valuable blessings. These blessings are described in highly figurative and beautiful language, in vs. 19—26. VII. JEHOVAH would show himself the protector of his people; and would in a signal and sudden manner overthrow and destroy the Assyrian, and deliver his people, vs. 27—33. The scope, therefore, of the chapter, is to lead them to look away from Egypt, and to put confidence in God, at whose hand they were about to experience so signal a deliverance from the much-dreaded invasion of Sennacherib.

1. Woe. Note, ch. xviii. 1. ¶ *To the rebellious children.* To those whom he had nourished as children, and who had rebelled against him. See Note, ch. i. 23. ¶ *That take counsel, but not of me.* They look to Egypt, and depend on a human arm. ¶ *And that cover with a covering.* The idea here, according to our translation, is, that they seek protection or a covering from the impending calamity. Lowth renders this, "who ratify covenants;" supposing that the reference is to the fact that in ancient times compacts were formed usually by offering sacrifices,

2. That <sup>d</sup> walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!

3. Therefore shall the strength

<sup>d</sup> ch. 31. 1.

of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt *your* confusion.

4. For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

2. Who set forward to go down to Egypt,  
But of my mouth they have not inquired,—  
To put their strength in the aid of Pharaoh,  
And to trust in the shadow of Egypt.
3. But the protection of Pharaoh shall be your shame,  
And your trust in the shadow of Egypt your disgrace.
4. For their princes were at Zoan,  
Their ambassadors arrived at Hanes.

and by pouring out libations. The Hebrew, according to Lowth, means, "who pour out a libation." So the LXX render it, "and thou hast made covenants"—*συνθήκας*. The Syriac renders it, "who pour out libations." The Hebrew word, *שָׁפַךְ*, properly conveys the idea of *pouring out*, and is applied (1) to the act of solemnly pouring out wine as a drink offering, or as a libation to God (1 Chron. xi. 18; Gen. xxxv. 14; Ex. xxx. 9; Hos. ix. 4); (2) to the act of pouring out oil, that is, to anointing kings and rulers (Ps. ii. 6; Dan. xi. 8); (3) to the act of pouring out melted metals, that is, to cast them. Isa. xl. 19; xlv. 10.—The word also may have a meaning kindred to *שָׁפַךְ*, and denote to *cover*, as in Isa. xxv. 7, and various derivatives from the word are rendered "to cover withal," Num. iv. 7; "the covering," Isa. xxviii. 20; "the web," that is, that which is woven for a covering, Judges xvi. 13, 14. The idea, however, which best suits the connexion here, is probably that suggested by Lowth, in accordance with the LXX and the Syriac, and adopted by Rosenmüller, Gesenius, and others, to make a libation; that is, to make a covenant, or compact. ¶ *But not of my spirit.* It was not such as was suggested by his spirit, and not such as he would approve. ¶ *That they may add sin to sin.* They add to the sin of rebellion against God

that of forming an alliance. Sins do not usually stand alone. When one is committed, it is often necessary to commit others in order to conceal that, or in order to carry out and complete the plan which that contemplated.

2. *That walk to go down into Egypt.* "Going in the descent to Egypt." That is, they do it by their ambassadors (ver. 4). The journey to Egypt from Palestine is always represented as going down. Gen. xii. 10; xlii. 3; xliii. 15; Num. xx. 15; Deut. x. 22. ¶ *To strengthen themselves, &c.* To form an alliance with Pharaoh, that thus they might be able to repel the threatened invasion. Pharaoh was the general name of the kings of Egypt, in the same manner as *Cæsar* was the common name of the emperors of Rome. ¶ *To trust in the shadow of Egypt.* A "shadow," *שֶׁטַל*, is an emblem of protection and defence—as a shade is a protection from the burning rays of the sun. See Note, ch. iv. 6.

3. *Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame.* See Note, ch. xx. 5. ¶ *Your confusion.* Heb., For shame, or reproach. It would either occur that the Egyptians would not enter into an alliance, or that if they did, they could not defend them, and in either case it would be the source of deep regret and shame.

4. *For his princes.* The sense of this

5. They were all ashamed \* of a people *that* could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach.

*c* Jer. 2. 36.

6. The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they will

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

5. They were all ashamed of a people that did not profit them ;  
They were no help and no profit,  
But were a shame and reproach.
6. The burdened beasts go southward,  
Into the land of trouble and anguish,  
Whence come the lioness and the fierce !  
The viper and the fiery flying serpent ;

verse seems to be this. The prophet is stating the fact that the Jews would be ashamed of their attempted alliance with Egypt. In this verse, and the following, he states the manner in which they would be made sensible of their shame and folly in seeking this alliance. He therefore enumerates several circumstances in regard to the manner in which the alliance had been sought, and the disappointment after all their vain confidence. He therefore states (ver. 4) that the Jews had employed persons of the highest respectability and honor, even princes, in order to secure the alliance ; that they had gone to Egypt with much difficulty—through a land of dangers, where lions, and vipers, and fiery serpents abounded, and that they had, at much hazard, taken their treasures down to Egypt, in order to secure the alliance (vs. 5, 6), and that, after all, the Egyptians could not aid them. The phrase, "his princes," refers to the princes of Judah, the ambassadors that the Jews sent forth; and the idea is conveyed, that they regarded the alliance as of so much importance, that they had employed their most honorable men, even their princes, in order to secure it. ¶ *Were at Zoan.* Had come to Zoan, or were there on the business of their embassy. On the situation of *Zoan*, see Notes on ch. xix. 11, 13. It was the residence of the kings in Lower Egypt, and would be the place to which the ambassadors would naturally resort to negotiate an

alliance. ¶ *Came to Hanes.* Respecting the situation of this place there has been much diversity of opinion among interpreters. The Chaldee renders it by the more full word, *Talpanhes*; and Grotius supposes that the word is contracted from *Talpanhes* (Jer. xliii. 7, 8), and that the name was sometimes abbreviated and written חנן, *Hanes*. Vitringa supposes that it was Anusis, situated in the Delta of the Nile, and the residence of the king of the same name. Herodotus (ii. 137) mentions a city of that name, Ἄνωσις. Anusis was a king of Egypt before the irruption of the Ethiopians, and it was not uncommon for a king to give his own name to a city. Probably Anusis is the city intended here; and the sense is, that they had come to the royal residence for the purpose of negotiating an alliance. It is known that in the time of Jeremiah (588 years before Christ), *Talpanhes* was the residence of Pharaoh, or royal residence, the capital of the nation. See Jer. xliii. 9.

5. *They were all ashamed, &c.* That is, all the legates or ambassadors. When they came into Egypt, they found them either unwilling to enter into an alliance, or unable to render them any aid, and they were ashamed that they had sought their assistance rather than depend on God. Comp. Jer. ii. 36.

6. *The burden of the beasts of the south.* The word *south* here refers, doubtless, to the country to the south of Judea,

carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit them.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

Upon the shoulders of young asses they carry their wealth,  
And upon the bunch of the camel their treasures,  
To a people that cannot profit them!

and particularly to Egypt. Thus it is used in Dan. xi. 5, 6. The phrase, "beasts of the south," here refers to the beasts or animals that were travelling to the south; that is, to Egypt. Isaiah, in vision, sees the caravan, heavily laden with treasures, pursuing a southern direction on its way to Egypt. The word "burden" is used in two senses, to denote that which is borne, a heavy burden; or an oracle, a solemn, or awful prophetic message. See Notes, ch. xv. 1; xvii. 1; xix. 1. Many have understood the word here in the latter sense, and regard this as the title of a prophetic message similar to that in ch. xv. 1; xvii. 1; xix. 1. But the word is doubtless used here in its more common and ordinary signification, to denote the load which is borne on animals, and here, especially, the heavy load of treasures, which were borne down to Egypt for the purpose of securing their friendly alliance. The prophet sees the caravan, or the beasts of the ambassadors heavily laden with rich treasures, travelling southward towards Egypt, and cries out, "O the heavy burden, the load of treasures going to the south." ¶ *Into the land of trouble and anguish.* Egypt; so called, either because it was the land where the Hebrews had formerly suffered so severe oppressions; or because it was a land where the subjects were now grievously oppressed and borne down with cruel laws; or because it was yet to be a land of trouble, from which the Jews could expect no aid. The general idea is, that Egypt was not a land of liberty and happiness, but a land where cruelty, oppression, and woe abounded. Hence the impropriety of their seeking aid and consolation from such a land. One

source of trouble, as emblematic of all, the prophet immediately mentions when he designates that it abounded with venomous reptiles. ¶ *From whence come.* That is, where all these animals and reptiles abound. ¶ *The young and old lion.* Lions of all descriptions. Lions were, of course, objects of dread. ¶ *The viper.* ἄσπις, Ephah. LXX, ἀσπίδες, asps. See Isa. lix. 5. This is a well known species of serpent. It is probably the same as the *El Effah* of the Arabs, which is thus described by Mr. Jackson:—"It is remarkable for its quick and penetrating poison; it is about two feet long, and as thick as a man's arm, beautifully spotted with yellow and brown, and sprinkled over with blackish specks, similar to the horn-nosed snake. They have a wide mouth, by which they inhale a great quantity of air, and when inflated therewith, they eject it with such force as to be heard at a considerable distance." It is well known that Egypt produced venomous reptiles in abundance. Cleopatra destroyed herself with the bite of an asp, which she had concealed for that purpose. ¶ *And fiery flying serpent.* ἑρπετὶς πτερόν. LXX, ἑρπετὶς ἀσπίδων πετομένων. This is the flying serpent so often referred to in the Scriptures. See a description of it in Notes on ch. xiv. 29. It is known to have abounded in the Arabian deserts, and was doubtless found also in Egypt, as being in the same latitude, and infested with similar reptiles. A species of serpent is described by travellers, which answers to this account. Niebuhr thus describes them:—"There is at Bakra a sort of serpents which they call *Heie Sursurie*, or *Heie Thiare*.

7. For <sup>f</sup> the Egyptians shall <sup>ing</sup> this, Their <sup>s</sup> strength is to sit help in vain, and to no purpose: still.

therefore have I cried <sup>1</sup> concern-

*f* Jer. 37. 7.

<sup>1</sup> or, to her.

*g* ver. 15

NEW TRANSLATION.

7. Empty and vain is the help of Egypt!

Wherefore I call her "the Blusterer that sitteth still."

They commonly keep upon the date-trees; and as it would be laborious for them to come down from a very high tree in order to ascend another, they twist themselves by the tail to a branch of the former, which, making a spring, by the motion they give it, throw themselves to the second. Hence it is that the modern Arabs call them the flying serpents, *Heie Thiäre*." Lord Anson, as quoted by Niebuhr, also speaks of them as follows:—"The Spaniards informed us that there was often found in the woods a most mischievous serpent, called the flying snake, which, they said, darted itself from the boughs of trees on either man or beast that came within its reach, and whose sting they took to be inevitable death." It is known, also, that there was a species of serpent which the Greeks called *Acontias*, and the Romans *Jaculus*, from their *swift darting motion*, and perhaps the same species is here referred to which Lucan calls *Jaculique volucres*. That these venomous reptiles abound in Egypt is expressly testified by profane writers. Thus Ammianus expressly declares (lib. xxii. cap. xv.) that "Egypt nourishes innumerable serpents, basilisks, and two-headed serpents, (amphisbænas,) and the scytalus, (a serpent of a glistening colour,) and the acontias, (Lat. *Jaculus*,) and adders, and vipers, and many others." ¶ *They will carry*, &c. That is, the beasts which were in the employ of the ambassadors who were going down to Egypt. ¶ *Their riches*. Presents, designed to induce the Egyptians to enter into the alliance. That it was a common custom to make presents when one king sent an embassy to another, whether the design was to show friendship or civility, or to form

an alliance, is well known, in regard to all the nations of the East. The custom prevails at the present day, and is often referred to in Scripture. See 1 Kings xv. 19; 2 Kings xvi. 8; xviii. 14, 15.

7. *For the Egyptians shall help in vain*, &c. That is, their aid shall be vain. If they enter into the alliance they shall not be able defend you from the invader. The other member of the sentence would seem to imply that they would make promises of aid, and would even boast of being able to deliver them, but that they would fail in their promises. ¶ *Therefore have I cried*. Therefore have I, the prophet, cried; i. e., I call her so. ¶ *Concerning this*. Concerning this country; that is, Egypt. Some have understood this as referring to Jerusalem, but the connexion requires us to understand it of Egypt. The sense is, that the prophet gave to Egypt the name which follows. ¶ *Their strength is to sit still*. This is evidently designed to be an expressive appellation of Egypt. The word here rendered, without much propriety, "strength," רַהַב *Rāhāb*, is a proper name of Egypt, and is several times applied to it. Isa. li. 9:

Art thou not it that hath cut *Rahab*,  
And wounded the dragon?

In this passage there can be no doubt that it refers to Egypt. So in Psalms lxxxvii. 4; lxxxix. 10, (see the margin.) Why it was given to Egypt is unknown, and can only be conjectured. Bochart (Geog. S. P. i. lib. iv. c. 24) supposes that it is derived from the word *ραβ*, which signifies a *pear*, and that it was given to the Delta, or Lower Egypt, on account of its form, as somewhat resem-



8. Now go, write it before them people, lying children, children in a table, and note it in a book, that will not hear the law of the LORD: that it may be for the <sup>1</sup> time to come for ever and ever:

9. That this is a rebellious <sup>b</sup>

<sup>1</sup> latter day.

<sup>a</sup> Deut. 32. 20.

10. Which say <sup>i</sup> to the seers,

<sup>f</sup> Jer. 11. 21. Amos 2. 12; 7. 13. Micah 2. 6, 11.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

8. Go now, write it before them on a tablet,  
And in a book record it,  
That it may be for future times,  
For a testimony for ever:—
9. That this is a rebellious people,  
Children perfidious,  
Children who will not hear the law of JEHOVAH.
10. Who say to the seers, "See not,"

bling a pear. But there is not clear evidence that such was the meaning of the word, and there is no reason why we should forsake the usual sense of the Hebrew word. The verb, *רָחַב*, *Rāhābh*, means, to urge, press on, attack, Prov. vi. 3; to be high spirited, fierce, full of courage; to behave proudly, Isa. iii. 5; and has, in most instances, a relation to pride, to arrogance, to boasting. Job ix. 13; Ps. xl. 4. The noun *Rahab* indicates ferocity, haughtiness, boasting, insolence; and the name was doubtless given to Egypt on account of its insolence and pride; and it is used here because Egypt would be full of self-confidence, and would probably boast that she could aid the suppliant Jews and deliver them from the threatened invasion. The phrase rendered "to sit still," is a part of the name which the prophet gave to her. Though she boasted, yet would she sit still; she would be inefficient, and would do nothing, and the whole name, therefore, may be rendered, "I call her, the blusterer that sitteth still;" that is, "they are courageous in talking; cowards in acting."—Taylor.

8. *Now go.* This is a direction to the prophet to make a permanent record of the character of the Jewish people. The fact to be recorded was, that they were a rebellious people (ver. 9); the design for which the record was to be made was to show to future times that this had been the uniform cha-

racter of the nation. The record was to be preserved to future times that it might be a proof of the care of God towards the nation, even in the midst of their long-continued and obstinate perverseness. ¶ *Write it before them.* Before the Jews themselves, or in their presence, that they may see the record, and may have it constantly before them. ¶ *In a table.* Or on a table. The word, *רֹבֵץ*, denotes a tablet, either of stone, to engrave upon (Deut. ix. 9; Ex. xxxi. 18), or of wood, 1 Kings vii. 36. Records were at first made on tablets of stone, wood, copper, &c. It is not improbable that this was to be exposed to public view in some conspicuous place near the temple. ¶ *And note it.* Engrave it; that is, record it. ¶ *In a book.* On parchment, or in the usual way of writing. See Note on ch. viii. 1. ¶ *For the time to come.* Heb., as in the margin, "the latter day." It was to be made in order that future ages might know what had been the character of that people, and what had been the patience and forbearance of God in regard to them. ¶ *For ever and ever.* In all future times.

9. *That this is a rebellious people.* Note, ch. i. 2. ¶ *Lying children.* They had promised in solemn covenant to take JEHOVAH as their God, but they had been unfaithful to their vows.

10. *Which say to the seers.* See Note,

See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us <sup>k</sup> smooth things, prophecy deceits:

& 1 Kings 22. 13.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

And to the prophets, "Prophecy not unto us right things,  
"Speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits.

11. "Recede from the way; decline from the path;  
"Cause to cease before us the Holy One of Israel.

ch. i. 1. ¶ *See not.* They desire not that they should communicate to them the will of JEHOVAH. ¶ *Prophecy not unto us right things.* It is not probable that they *openly* demanded of the prophets that they should declare falsehood and deceit; but their conduct was *as if* they had demanded that. The sense is, they bore with impatience the threatenings and commands of the true prophets; they were offended at their plainness and their reproofs of their vices; and they preferred the false prophets, who fell in with their prejudices; who assured them of the divine protection, and did not denounce the judgment of God for their crimes. ¶ *Speak unto us smooth things.* That is, those things which are in accordance with our feelings, prejudices and desires; which assure us of prosperity and success; which will not disturb us with the apprehension of punishment. This was spoken *particularly* probably of their desire to make a league with Egypt, an enterprise which the true prophets discouraged, and for which they threatened them with the divine displeasure, but which probably the false prophets encouraged. ¶ *Prophecy deceits.* Not that they would openly and avowedly demand to be deceived; but they demanded that which the prophet says *would be* deceits. No man *professedly* desires to be deceived; but many a man is willing to put himself under that kind of teaching which is deceit, and which he might know to be deceit and falsehood if he would examine it.

11. *Get ye out of the way.* Or

11. Get ye out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

rather, "Recede from the way;" or, "Turn aside from the way." The words "way," and "path," are used to denote the true religion, or the true doctrines of God. Matt. vii. 14; xxii. 16; John xiv. 4; Acts xviii. 26; xix. 9, 23; 2 Pet. ii. 15. The request here was, that the true prophets would recede from the straight path; from the stern and true precepts of religion; from their habits of declaring the truth, and turn to the ways of falsehood and deceit. ¶ *Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.* The sense of this is, "Let us hear no more of this name. We are weary of so constantly hearing it, as if there was nothing else but the ceaseless repetition of the name *the Holy One of Israel.*" It is to be remembered, that the prophets spoke in this name, and often commenced their prophecies with the announcement, "Thus saith the Holy One of Israel." No one more frequently used this than Isaiah. See vs. 12, 15. Comp. ch. i. 4; v. 19, 24; x. 20; xii. 6; xvii. 7; xxix. 19; xxxi. 1; xli. 14, &c. It is probable that a reference constantly to the fact that he was HOLY was that which most troubled them. And as they were called to a holy life; as his judgment was denounced against them for revolt and apostasy, they desired to hear no more of this name. How descriptive of the feelings of sinners! How striking an illustration of the fact that they do not wish to hear of the name, or laws, of the Holy Lord God! And what a melancholy proof of depravity is it when men pursue such a course that they do not wish to hear of him, and

12. Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust <sup>1</sup> in <sup>1</sup> oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon:

<sup>1</sup> Ps. 62. 10.

<sup>1</sup> or, *fraud*.

13. Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach <sup>m</sup> ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.

<sup>m</sup> Ps. 62. 2.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

12. Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel;  
Because ye have rejected this word,  
And<sup>\*</sup> trusted in oppression and perversion,  
And lean upon it,

13. Therefore this iniquity be unto you  
Like a breach threatening ruin, swelling out in a high wall,  
Whose breaking cometh suddenly in an instant.

desire no more to be troubled with his name and laws!

12. *Wherefore thus saith the Holy One, JEHOVAH.* There may be some reference here to the fact adverted to in ver. 11, that they were weary of the name of the Holy One of Israel, and of the perpetual reiteration of his commands. Isaiah, as if to show them how little he was disposed to comply with their prejudices, again makes an appeal to that name, and urges the authority of JEHOVAH. It is often proper to repeat the very doctrine to which sinners object, and which has excited their anger and given them offence. That they are offended, shows that their minds are awake to the truth, and gives some indication that their consciences trouble them. Ministers of God should never shrink from their duty because men oppose them; they should never cease to speak in the name and by the authority of the Holy One of Israel because that name may excite opposition and disgust. ¶ *Ye despise this word.* That is, the word, or message of JEHOVAH (ch. xxviii. 13, 14); or perhaps it means, the word, "Holy One of Israel." The sense is, that they did not trust in the promise and protection of JEHOVAH, but relied on human aid. ¶ *And trust in oppression.* Marg., *fraud*. The word, *פָּשַׁע*, properly denotes oppression, or extortion (Eccl. v. 7; Ezek. xxii. 7, 12); then, that which is obtained by unjust exaction;

by extortion, and also by fraud. Lev. vi. 4; Ps. lxii. 11; Eccl. vii. 7. It may refer here to the fact that they had, by unjust and oppressive exactions, obtained the treasures referred to in ver. 6, by which they hoped to conciliate the favor of Egypt. Or it may mean, that they trusted in their unjust and fraudulent purposes toward God; that is, to a false and perfidious course, by which they were unfaithful to him, and put their trust in men. ¶ *Perverseness.* A crooked, perverse, rebellious course. They refused submission to JEHOVAH, and relied on the aid of strangers.

13. *Therefore this iniquity.* That is, this refusing to trust in JEHOVAH, and this purpose to seek the alliance of Egypt. The general sense of the figure here is plain. It means that their depending on Egypt would involve them ultimately in complete and awful ruin—ruin that should come upon them as suddenly as a wall that had been long swelling out when it gives way. ¶ *As a breach ready to fall.* Like a breaking forth, or a bursting in of a wall. ¶ *Swelling out in a high wall.* That is, where the foundation is not firm, and where one part of the wall sinks and it inclines to one side until it suddenly bursts forth. A similar figure is used by the Psalmist:

Ye shall be slain all of you:

As a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.

Ps. lxi. 3.

14. And he shall break <sup>a</sup> it as the breaking of the <sup>1</sup> potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water *withal* out of the pit.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 2. 9. Jer. 19. 11.

<sup>1</sup> *bottle of potters.*

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

14. And it shall be broken as the breaking of a potter's vessel,  
Which is dashed in pieces and is not spared;  
So that there shall not be found in its bursting a fragment  
To take up fire from the hearth,  
Or to dip up water from the pit.

¶ *Whose breaking, &c.* Though it has been long leaning and swelling, yet the actual bursting forth shall be in an instant. So would it be with the destruction that should come upon the Jews. Though by their sins they had been long preparing for it, yet it would come upon them by a sudden and tremendous crash.

14. *And he shall break it as the breaking.* That is, it shall be broken; or its breaking shall be like the breaking of a potter's vessel. The LXX read it, "and its fall *τὸ πρῶμα*, shall be like the breaking of an earthen vessel." ¶ *As the breaking of the potters' vessel.* The vessel which a potter has made; that is, as an earthen, fragile vessel, which is easily dashed completely to pieces. The image here is all drawn from the bursting forth, or the complete ruin of the swelling wall; but the sense is, that the Jewish republic should be entirely broken, scattered, demolished. ¶ *He shall not spare.* That is, it shall be completely dissolved and ruined. ¶ *In the bursting of it.* Figuratively, in the bursting of the wall; literally, in the destruction of the Jewish state and polity. ¶ *A sherd.* A piece of pottery; a fragment. ¶ *To take fire from the hearth.* Large enough to carry coals on. ¶ *Or to take water withal out of the pit.* Out of the fountain, or pool; that is, it shall be broken into small fragments, and the ruin shall be complete—as when a wall tumbles down and is completely broken up and destroyed. The sense is, that the republic of Israel should be completely overturned and

ruined, so that there should not be found a counsellor, or a man of any description, who could help and aid them. The prophet does not specify when this would be. It is not necessary to suppose that it would occur on the invasion of Sennacherib, or that it would be the immediate consequence of seeking the aid of Egypt; but that it would be a consequence, though a remote one. The idea is not, indeed, that the destruction would come immediately; and perhaps the figure used would lead us to look to some remote and distant period. A high wall will begin to swell and give way many years before its fall. The swell will be gradual, and perhaps almost imperceptible. For some time it may appear to be stationary; then perhaps some new cause shall operate to produce an increase of the projecting part, until it can no longer sustain itself, and then the ruin shall be sudden and tremendous. So it would be with the Jews. The seeking of the alliance with Egypt was one cause—though a remote one—of their final ruin. This forsaking God, and seeking human aid, was gradually but certainly *undermining* the foundations of the state—as a wall may be gradually undermined. Frequent repetitions of that would more and more impair the real strength of the republic and expose it to the wrath of God, until, for their accumulated acts of want of confidence, the patience of God would be exhausted, and the state would fall like a mighty bursting wall. The prophecy was fulfilled, certainly, in the invasion of Jeru-

15. For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest ° shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

o ver. 7.

16. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue <sup>p</sup> you be swift.

p 2 Kings 25. 5.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

15. For thus saith the Lord JEHOVAH, the Holy One of Israel;  
By returning, and abiding quiet, shall ye be saved;  
In quietness and confidence shall be your strength;—  
But ye would not.
16. But ye said, No: but on horses will we fly;—  
Therefore shall ye be put to flight:  
And on swift coursers will we ride;—  
Therefore your pursuers shall be swift.

salem by the Chaldeans; it had a more signal and awful fulfilment in its destruction by the Romans.

15. *For thus saith the Lord God.* The design of this verse is to give a reason for the destruction that should come upon them. That reason was, that God had indicated to them the path of truth and safety, but they chose not to follow it, but cast off his government, and refused to put confidence in him. ¶ *In returning.* In returning to God; that is, if you are converted to him. ¶ *And rest.* That is, by calmly reposing on God for assistance, and not seeking the alliance of Egypt. See Ex. xiv. 13. ¶ *In quietness.* In a collected, quiet state of mind. ¶ *In confidence.* By putting simple trust in God. ¶ *Shall be your strength.* You shall be safe; your enemies shall not be able to overcome and subdue you. ¶ *And ye would not.* When Jerusalem was threatened by Sennacherib, Hezekiah did put this confidence in God, and reposed calmly and securely on his promises, (Isa. xxxvi. 15, 18, 21;) but it is not improbable that when the city was first threatened, and Hezekiah heard of the preparations made by the Assyrians, he had joined with the party in Jerusalem who proposed an alliance with Egypt, and that this was known to Sennacherib. Isa. xxxvi. 6. Probably,

however, before the invasion had actually commenced, he had seen the impropriety of this, either because the aid of Egypt could not be secured, or because Isaiah had warned him of this, and he had been brought to put his trust entirely in JEHOVAH. Yet the offence *had been* committed, of refusing to put implicit confidence in JEHOVAH, and of seeking the aid of Egypt, and for that the punishment is threatened in this chapter. Vs. 16, 17.

16. *But ye said, No.* Ye who proposed an alliance with Egypt. ¶ *For we will flee upon horses.* The word *flee*, פָּרַח, usually signifies, to flee before, or from, any person or thing. But here it seems to have the notion of making a rapid motion in general, and not to refer to the fact that they expected to flee from their enemy, which does not seem to have been a part of their expectation. The idea seems to be, that by their alliance with Egypt they would secure the means of *rapid motion*, whatever might be the necessity or occasion for it, whether against, or from, an enemy. The sense is, “we will by this alliance secure the assistance of cavalry,” and doubtless the design was to employ it in the attack and discomfiture of their foes. It will be recollected that Moses (Deut. xvii. 16) strictly forbade that the future monarch of the Jews should

17. One thousand <sup>q</sup> *shall flee* be left as <sup>l</sup> a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

q Deut. 32. 30.

<sup>l</sup> or, a tree bereft of branches, or, boughs; or, a mast.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

17. A thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one;  
At the rebuke of five shall ye flee;  
Till ye be left as a beacon on a mountain,  
And like a banner on a hill.

"multiply horses to himself, to cause the people to return to Egypt," and that consequently the employment of cavalry was against the laws of the nation. For the reasons of this prohibition, see Note on ch. ii. 7. The attempt, therefore, in the time of Hezekiah, to call in the aid of the cavalry of Egypt, was a violation of both the letter and the spirit of the Jewish institutions. Comp. ch. xxxi. 1; Hos. xiv. 4. ¶ *Therefore shall ye flee.* You shall flee before your enemies; you shall be defeated and scattered. ¶ *We will ride upon the swift.* That is, upon fleet horses or coursers. Arabia was celebrated, and is still, for producing fleet coursers, and the same was formerly true of Egypt. See Note on ch. ii. 7.

17. *One thousand, &c.* The sense of this is, that you shall be timid, easily alarmed, and overcome by those who are inferior in numbers and strength. The number "one thousand," is put for a large indefinite number; probably meaning all. ¶ *At the rebuke.* At the war-cry; i. e., before one. ¶ *Of one.* The number *one* here is put to denote a very small number; a number in the ordinary course of warfare entirely disproportionate to those who should be vanquished. There is probably a reference here to the prediction in Deut. xxxii. 30:

How should one chase a thousand,  
And two put ten thousand to flight,  
Except their Rock had sold them,  
And JEHOVAH had shut them up?

¶ *At the rebuke of five.* Of a very small number ¶ *Shall ye flee.* You

shall not be able to stand before a very small number. ¶ *Till ye be left.* As a people, or nation. ¶ *As a beacon upon the top of a mountain.* The word rendered *beacon*, מִצְבֵּה (Gr., *ιστὸς*, a mast), denotes, properly, the mast of a ship, Isa. xxxiii. 23; Ezek. xxvii. 5; then, probably, anything resembling a mast, a flag-staff, or a beacon of any kind. It may refer to a staff, or mast, erected on a promontory, to warn sailors, or to be a land-mark—as it is not improbable that the masts of ships would be employed for that purpose; or it may refer to a flag-staff, erected on a conspicuous place, to which the nation could rally in time of war. The idea seems to be, that of a long pole erected for any purpose, and which was standing alone, stripped of its leaves and branches, and without ornament. So would be the few, solitary, and scattered Jews, when driven before their enemies. ¶ *And as an ensign on an hill.* See Note, ch. v. 26; xi. 12. The idea is, that those who should escape would be few in number, and would stand alone, as a beacon in view of all the nations, to admonish them of the justice of God, and the truth of his threatenings—like an ensign floating on a hill, that can be seen from afar. What a striking description is this of the condition of the Jews in our times, and, indeed, in all ages since their dispersion! Their strength, and influence, and power, as a people, are gone. They stand as beacons to warn the nations of the evils of a want of confidence in God, and of his justice.

18. And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: *blessed are all they that wait for him.*
19. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when *he shall hear it, he will answer thee.*

r Hos. 5. 15.

s Ps. 34. 8.

t ch. 65. 9, 24.

u Jer. 29. 12—14.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

18. Yet moreover shall JEHOVAH wait to be gracious unto you,  
And moreover will he be exalted to have mercy on you;  
For he is a God of equity:  
Blessed are all they that wait for him!
19. For the people shall dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem.  
Thou shalt no more weep:  
At the voice of thy cry he shall be very gracious unto thee,  
No sooner shall he hear it than he shall answer thee.

18. *And therefore.* The sense of the words rendered "and therefore," may be better expressed by the phrase, "yet moreover," meaning, that notwithstanding their sins, and the necessity of punishing them, JEHOVAH would be long-suffering, and would yet bring the nation to repentance, and that his religion should yet flourish among them. ¶ *Will the LORD wait.* He will not utterly destroy the nation, but will yet bring them to repentance, and to himself. ¶ *And therefore will he be exalted.* Lowth renders this, in accordance with a conjecture of Houbigant, "shall he expect in silence," by reading יָרִים instead of יָרֵם. But there is no authority for this except a single MS. Rosenmüller supposes it means, in accordance with the interpretation of Jarchi, that he would delay; i. e., that his mercy would be long or his judgment remote. But the sense seems to be, that God would be so forbearing that his character would be exalted, i. e. praised, or magnified in view of it. Men would have more elevated conceptions of his truth, and mercy, and faithfulness. ¶ *For the LORD is a God of judgment.* Of equity. He will do what is right. He will spare the nation still; and yet establish among them the true religion, and they shall flourish.

¶ *Blessed are all they that wait for him.* This seems to have been recorded to encourage them, when the threatened calamities should come upon them, to put their confidence in God, and to trust that he would yet appear and restore the nation to himself. This verse is the commencement of the annunciation of the blessings which should yet be conferred on them. The description of these blessings is continued to ver. 26.

19. *For the people shall dwell in Zion.* Note, ch. i. 8. The language here is evidently adapted to a promise of a return from the captivity. The whole design of the passage (vs. 19—26) is to describe a future state of prosperity by images mainly drawn from the idea of temporal happiness and enjoyment. The sense is, that in future times, in some periods subsequent to the calamities that should befall them for their improper reliance on the aid of Egypt (vs. 16, 17), there would be times of prosperity; times when there would be peace and joy in Jerusalem, when they would dwell in safety, and when piety would prevail. The order of events, as seen by the prophet in vision, seems to be this:—He sees the people threatened with an invasion by Sennacherib. He sees them forget their reliance on

20. And *though* \* the LORD shall not thy teachers be, <sup>y</sup> re-  
give you the bread of adversity, moved into a corner any more,  
and the water of affliction, <sup>1</sup> yet but thine eyes shall see thy  
teachers:

\* Ps. 30. 5.

<sup>1</sup> or, oppression.

y Ps. 74. 9. Amos 8. 11, 12.

NEW TRANSLATION.

20. And though JEHOVAH shall give you the bread of adversity,  
And the water of affliction,  
Yet shall thy teachers not be removed any more,  
But thine eyes shall see thy teachers.

God, and seek the aid of Egypt. He sees, as a consequence of this, heavy judgments that would follow. He sees a long series of calamities resulting in the downfall of the republic, the destruction of the city, and the long captivity at Babylon. Yet he sees, in the distant prospect, prosperity, happiness, security, piety, the blessing of God, and rich and abundant future mercies resting on his people. That the blessings under the Messiah constitute a part of this *group and series* of mercies no one can doubt who attentively considers the language in vs. 25, 26. The simple sense of the passage before us, then, is, that *in future times* the people shall be safely returned to Zion, and shall dwell securely in that city. ¶ *Thou shalt weep no more.* See Note, ch. xxv. 8. ¶ *He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry.* When in your calamities, you shall cry unto him for deliverance, he shall hear you, and restore you to your own land. This is in accordance with the statements in ch. xxvi. 8, 9, (see Notes on these verses,) that in their captivity and woes in Babylon they would seek God. ¶ *He will answer thee.* See Jer. xxix. 12—14.

20. And though the LORD give you. The idea is, that JEHOVAH would give them the bread of affliction, but would subsequently have mercy upon them. ¶ *The bread of adversity.* The bread that is eaten in a time of calamity; that is, he would bring upon them times of sore distress and want. ¶ *The water of affliction.* Marg., "oppression." That is, water drank in times of affliction and oppression or in

the long and weary days of captivity. ¶ *Yet shall not thy teachers.* Your public instructors and guides. Ps. lxxiv. 9; Amos viii. 11, 12; Isa. xliii. 27; Dan. xii. 3. This refers to *all* those who should be the true guides and teachers of the people of God in subsequent times, and relates, therefore, not only to prophets, and pious men whom God would raise up under their own dispensation, but also to all whom God would appoint to communicate his will; and the idea is, that his people should be furnished with instructors who should make known the will of God and the duty of men. It is a promise that the church of God should never want a pious and devoted ministry, who shall be qualified to make known his will and defend his truth. ¶ *Be removed into a corner.* The word here used (קָנַן from קָנָן) occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures. It is probably derived from קָנָן, a wing; and in the Syriac and Chaldee it means to collect together. The LXX render this, "and they who deceived thee shall no more come near unto thee." The Syriac, "and he (that is, the Lord) shall no more collect thy seducers." The Chaldee, "and he shall no more take away his own glory from the house of his sanctuary." Rosenmüller in accordance with Schultens, renders, it, "and thy teachers shall no more hide themselves," referring to the fact that the wing of a fowl furnishes a hiding place, or shelter. This would accord with the general idea that they should not be removed from public view. Lowth, singularly, and without au-



21. And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This <sup>z</sup> is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

22. Ye shall defile also the

covering of thy <sup>1</sup> graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt <sup>2</sup> cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence. <sup>a</sup>

<sup>1</sup> the graven images of thy silver.  
<sup>2</sup> scatter. <sup>a</sup> Hos. 14. 8.

z Ps. 32. 8.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

21. And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee,

Saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it;"

When ye turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

22. Ye shall defile the silver covering of thy graven images,

And the golden ornament of thy molten images;

Thou shalt cast them away as an unclean thing;

Away! shalt thou say unto them.

thority from the versions or MSS., renders it,

Yet the timely rain shall no more be restrained.

The general idea is, evidently, that they should be no more taken away; and probably the specific idea is that proposed by Taylor (Heb. Concord.), that thy teachers shall no more, as it were, *be winged*, or fly away; that is, be removed by flight, or as a flock of birds moving together rapidly on the wing.

21. *And thine ears shall hear a word.*

A command, admonition, or instruction. You shall not be left without spiritual guides and directors. ¶ *Behind thee.* That is, says Vitrina, the voice of conscience, as an *invisible* guide, shall admonish you. The idea, however, seems to be this:—that if they were ignorant of the way, or if they were inclined to err, they should be admonished of the true path which they ought to pursue. The idea is taken either from the practice of teachers, or guides of youth, who are represented as *following* them and admonishing them if they were in danger of going astray (Grotius); or from shepherds, who are represented as following their flocks, and directing them when they wandered. The Jews understand this voice "from behind" of the *Bath Kol*—"the daughter of the voice;" a divine admonition which they suppose attends the pious. The essential idea is, that they would not be

left without a guide and instructor; that if they were inclined to go astray, they would be recalled to the path of truth and duty. *Perhaps* there is the idea also that the admonition would come from some *invisible* influence, and from some unexpected quarter, as it is often the case that those who are inquiring and anxious on the subject of religion, receive light from quarters where they least expected, and from sources to which they were not looking. It is also true, that the admonitions of Providence, and of conscience, and of the Holy Spirit, seem often to come from *behind us*; that is, they *recall* us from the path in which we were going, and restrain us from a course that would be fraught with danger. ¶ *When ye turn to the right hand, &c.* When you shall be in danger of erring and wandering from the direct and straight path, the voice shall recall you, and direct you in the way in which you ought to go.

22. *Ye shall defile also.* That is, you shall regard and treat them as polluted and abominable. This is language which is often used respecting their treatment of the images and altars of idolatry when they became objects of abomination, and when they were induced to abandon them. See 2 Kings xxiii. 8, 10, 16. It is not improbable that before destroying them, they would express their abhorrence of them by some act of polluting or defiling them,

23. Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.

24. The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean <sup>1</sup> provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.

<sup>1</sup> *leavened, or, savory.*

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

23. And he shall give rain for thy seed,  
With which thou shalt sow the ground  
And bread, the produce of the earth,  
And it shall be rich and abundant;  
In that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.
24. The oxen also, and the young asses that till the ground,  
Shall eat the well-fermented maslin,  
Which has been cleaned with the winnowing shovel and the fan.

as significant of their contempt for the objects of degraded idolatry. See Note, ch. ii. 20. The sense of the whole passage is, that the effect of the judgments which God was about to bring upon the nation would be, to turn them from idolatry, to which as a nation they had been signally prone. ¶ *The covering.* It is probable that the images of idols were usually made of wood or clay, and overlaid with gold. That gold and silver were used to plate them is apparent from Deut. vii. 25; and the whole process of making them from wood, and then of overlaying them with plates of gold and silver, is described with inimitable graphic power and severity of irony in Isa. xl. 19, 20; xli. 6, 7. ¶ *Thy graven images of silver.* Marg., the graven images of thy silver. Probably the construction in the text is correct, as meaning that the images were not made of entire silver, but of wood or clay, plated or covered with silver. ¶ *And the ornament.* The golden plates or the covering of the images. ¶ *Thy molten images.* The word *mollen* refers to those which were made by casting. See Notes on ch. xl. 19, 20. ¶ *Thou shalt cast them away,* &c. See Note, ch. ii. 20. This would be in accordance with the express direction of Moses. Deut. vii. 25: "The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire; thou

shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein; for it is an abomination unto the LORD thy God."

23. *Then shall he give the rain of thy seed.* Or, he shall send rain on the seed which is sown. You will be allowed to cultivate the soil without molestation, and God will give you fruitful seasons and abundant harvests. This is a poetic description of a happy, or golden age, when there should be peace and prosperity. Comp. Notes on ch. xi. 6, 7. ¶ *And bread of the increase of the earth.* And bread, the produce of the ground, or which the ground shall produce. ¶ *And it shall be fat and plenteous.* It shall be rich and abundant; that is, there shall be prosperity, and an ample supply of your wants. ¶ *Feed in large pastures.* This is a description of prosperity and security, when their cattle should be permitted to roam at large, and have abundant pasture—an image of prosperity that would be very striking and gratifying to a people whose main conception of wealth consisted in abundance of flocks and herds.

24. *The young asses that ear the ground.* Heb., "Labouring, or cultivating the ground," that is, ploughing it. The old English word *ear* (from the Latin, *aro*) meant to till, to cultivate. The word is now obsolete; but this is the sense

25. And there shall be upon the great slaughter, when the every high mountain, and upon towers fall.  
every <sup>1</sup> high hill, rivers and 26. Moreover the light <sup>b</sup> of streams of waters in the day of the moon shall be as the light of  
*1 lifted up.* *b ch. 60. 19, 20.*

## NEW TRANSLATION.

25. And on every high mountain,  
And on every lofty hill,  
There shall be brooks, streams of waters,  
In the day of the great slaughter,  
When the towers fall.  
26. And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun,  
And the light of the sun shall be seven-fold,

which it has in the Bible. 1 Sam. viii. 12; Deut. xxi. 4; Gen. xlv. 6; Ex. xxxiv. 21. ¶ *Shall eat clean provender.* Marg., *leavened*, or, *savory*. The word rendered *provender*, מִזְּהָ, is a verbal, from מִזַּה, to mix, mingle, confuse; and denotes provender that is made by *mixing* various substances, *maslin* or *farrago*, a mixture of barley, and oats, and vetches, and beans, which seem to have been sown together, and reaped at the same time. Job vi. 5; xxiv. 6. The word rendered *clean*, טָהוֹר, is not quite so plain in its signification. Kimchi explains it by טָהוֹר, pure, clean. Gesenius renders it *salted*, and supposes that it refers to fodder that was mixed with salted hay. The LXX render it, "provender mixed with winnowed barley." But the real notion of the word is, that which is *fermented*, from טָהַר, to be sour, or bitter; to be leavened. Lowth renders it, "well-fermented." Noyes, "well-seasoned." The idea seems to be that of a provender made of a mixture of various substances—as of grain, beans, vetches, herbs, hay, and probably salt, which, when mixed, would ferment, and which was regarded as nutritious and wholesome for cattle. A similar compound is used by the Arabs still. See Bochart, p. 1. lib. 2, c. vii.; and Faber and Harmer's Observations upon the East, p. i. 409. ¶ *Which hath been winnowed.* That is, which is the pure grain, which is not fed to them, as it is sometimes, with the chaff, or before it is separated from the

chaff. Grain shall be so abundant in that time of prosperity, that even the cattle may be fed with grain prepared as it is usually for man. ¶ *With the shovel.* The winnowing shovel; the large shovel by which the grain in the chaff was thrown up in the wind, that the grain might be separated from the chaff. ¶ *The fan.* This word properly means that by which anything is scattered—a shovel by which the grain is thrown or tossed into the wind. "Those who form their opinion of the latter article by an English *fan*, will entertain a very erroneous notion. That of the East is made of the fibrous part of the palmirah or cocoa-tree leaves, and measures about a yard each way. Thus may be seen the farmer wafting away the chaff from the corn, having the round part of the fan in his hand; and thus may be seen the females in the morning, tossing in the husk from their rice." Roberts.

25. *In the day of the great slaughter.* When the enemies of the people of God shall have been destroyed—probably in a time subsequent to the slaughter of the army of the Assyrians. ¶ *When the towers fall.* The towers of the enemy; the ramparts, bulwarks, &c., in which they trusted—perhaps referring here to the towers of Babylon, the strong fortresses in which they trusted. After they should fall, the Jews would be favored with the time of prosperity to which the prophet here refers.

26. *Moreover.* In addition to all the

the sun, and the light of the sun of their wound.

shall be sevenfold, as the light of 27. Behold, the name of the  
 seven days, in the day that the LORD cometh from far, burning  
 LORD bindeth up the breach of with his anger, and <sup>1</sup> the burden  
 his people, and healeth the stroke

<sup>1</sup> or, *grievousness of flame.*

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

As the light of seven days,  
 In the day when JEHOVAH bindeth up the bruise of his people,  
 And healeth the stroke of their wound.

27. Lo! the name of JEHOVAH cometh from afar,  
 His anger burneth, and the flame is heavy :

blessings which are enumerated above.  
 ¶ *The light of the moon, &c.* Light is  
 in the Scriptures an emblem of joy, in-  
 telligence, happiness, prosperity; as  
 darkness is an emblem of ignorance,  
 calamity, &c. This figure is often used  
 by the poets. Thus Horace :

"Soles melius nitent."

Carm. Lib. iv. Od. v. 8.

The figure of augmenting light to de-  
 note the blessings of religion, and espe-  
 cially of the gospel, is a figure often  
 employed by Isaiah. Comp. Notes, ch.  
 ix. 2; x. 17; xiii. 10; lx. 19, 20; ii. 5;  
 lviii. 8, 10; lx. 1, 3. The sense of this  
 passage is, that in those future days the  
 light would shine intensely, and with-  
 out obscurity; that though they had  
 been walking in the light of the true  
 religion, yet that their light would be  
 greatly augmented, and that they would  
 have much clearer views of the divine  
 character and government. That this  
 refers to the times of the Messiah there  
 can be little or no room to doubt. It is  
 language such as Isaiah commonly em-  
 ploys to describe the times of the Mes-  
 siah; and there is a fulness and splendor  
 about it which can suit no other period  
 or event. There is nothing in the con-  
 nexion, moreover, which forbids such  
 an interpretation of the passage. ¶ *Shall  
 be as the light of the sun.* Shall be clear,  
 bright, intense. The sense is, there  
 shall be a great increase of light, as  
 much as if the light of the moon were  
 suddenly increased to the brightness  
 of the meridian sun. ¶ *Shall be seven-  
 fold.* Seven times as intense and clear  
 as usual, as if the light of seven days

were concentrated into one. The word  
*seven*, in the Scriptures, often denotes a  
 complete or perfect number, and indi-  
 cates *completeness or perfection*. The  
 phrase, "as the light of seven days,"  
 Lowth supposes is a gloss which has  
 been taken from the margin and intro-  
 duced into the text. The reasons which  
 he adduces for this supposition are, that  
 it is wanting in the LXX, and that it  
 interrupts the rhythmical construction.  
 But this is not sufficient authority for  
 rejecting the words from the text. No  
 authority of MSS. is adduced for thus  
 rejecting them, and the words are found  
 in the Vulgate, the Chaldee, and the  
 Syriac. They are wanting, however,  
 in the Arabic. ¶ *In the day, &c.*  
 Vitringa supposes that this refers to the  
 time of the Maccabees; but although  
 there may be a reference to that time,  
 yet the idea is evidently designed to in-  
 clude the future times of the Messiah.  
 The sense of the prophet is, that *sub-  
 sequent* to the great calamities which  
 were to befall them, there should be a  
 time of great and glorious prosperity,  
 and the design of this was to comfort  
 them with the assurance that their na-  
 tion should not be wholly destroyed.  
 ¶ *Bindeth up the breach of his people.*  
 Or the wound. The calamity that  
 should come upon them is thus repre-  
 sented as a *wound* inflicted on them by  
 the stripes of punishment. See Note on  
 ch. i. 5. JEHOVAH would bind it up,  
 or would heal it by restoring them to  
 their own land, and to their former pri-  
 vileges.

27. Behold, the name of the LORD

thereof is <sup>1</sup> heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: <sup>c</sup>

28. And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the

<sup>1</sup> heaviness.

<sup>c</sup> Zeph. 3. 8.

midst of the neck, to sift <sup>d</sup> the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle <sup>e</sup> in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.

<sup>d</sup> Luke 22. 31.

<sup>e</sup> ch. 37. 29.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

His lips are full of indignation,  
And his tongue like a devouring fire.

28. His breath is like an overflowing torrent,

To the neck shall it reach,

To toss the nations with the winnowing shovel of perdition,

To put a bridle in the jaws of the people that shall lead them astray.

cometh, &c. The verses following to the end of the chapter are designed evidently to describe the destruction of the army of Sennacherib. This is expressly declared in ver. 31, and all the circumstances in the prediction accord with that event. There is no necessity of supposing that this is the commencement of a new prophecy, for it is connected with the main subject in the previous part of the chapter. The whole prophecy was composed evidently in view of that threatened invasion. In the apprehension of that, they sought the aid of Egypt, (vs. 1—6;) for that, the prophet denounces judgment on them, (vs. 8, seq. ;) in view of these judgments, however, he promises a more happy state, (vs. 18—26;) and now, in the close of the chapter, in order, it seems, to deter them from the alliance, he assures them that, without any foreign aid, the Assyrian should be destroyed by JEHOVAH himself. The phrase "name of JEHOVAH," is probably another mode of designating JEHOVAH himself; as the name of God is often put for God himself. See Acts iv. 10; 1 Cor. i. 10; Acts iii. 6; iv. 7, 12, 30. The idea is, that the destruction of the Assyrian hosts would be accomplished by the immediate presence and power of JEHOVAH himself, without any need of the aid of the Egyptian or of any foreign alliances. ¶ *Cometh.* See Notes on ch. xix. 1. ¶ *From far.* That is, from heaven. Comp. Note, ch. xix. 1. ¶ *Burning with his anger.* Or,

rather, his anger burns, or is enkindled.

¶ *And the burden thereof.* Marg., "grievousness of flame." Lowth renders it, "the flame rageth violently;" Noyes, "violent is the flame." The LXX render it, "a burning wrath."

The word נָשָׂא, from נָסָא, to bear, lift up, carry, &c., means, properly, a lifting up, (Ps. cxli. 2;) a burden, (Zeph. iii. 18;) then a *mounting up*, particularly of a flame or smoke in a conflagration. Judges xx. 38. This seems to be the idea here, that the anger of God would be like a heavy, dark column of mingled smoke and flame bursting out and rising up over a city; that is, his anger should be terrible, and should destroy all before it. ¶ *His lips are full of indignation, &c.* All this language is, of course, figurative, and means, that he would issue a command to destroy the Assyrians, or that they should be destroyed in such a manner as most effectively to exhibit his displeasure. ¶ *And his tongue as a devouring fire.* That is, he shall issue a command that shall burn and destroy like a raging and devouring fire.

28. *And his breath.* Or his spirit; that is, his wrath. The word רָחַק properly means wind, air in motion; then a breathing, an exhalation, a breath; then the soul, spirit, &c. The idea here seems to be that of excited, and rapid, and agitated breathing, as when one is in anger. Comp. Judges viii. 3; Zech. vi. 8. ¶ *As an overflowing stream.* This figure is a common one to express deso-

29. Ye shall have a song, as <sup>f</sup> pipe to come into the mountain of in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and <sup>c</sup> gladness of Israel. heart, as when one goeth with a

f Ps. 42. 4.

<sup>c</sup> Rock.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

9. To you there shall be a song as in the night when a festival is proclaimed;

And joy of heart as when one goeth with the sound of the pipe  
To come unto the mountain of JEHOVAH,  
To the Rock of Israel.

lating judgments. Note, Isa. viii. 8; x. 22; xxviii. 17. Comp. Ps. lxix. 2, 15. ¶ *Shall reach to the midst of the neck.* Isaiah (ch. viii. 8), in describing the invasion of Sennacherib, and comparing it to an overflowing torrent, says it should "reach even to the neck,"—that is, it should overflow the land, and should even approach the head, the capital, but that that should be spared—as when a man's head is above the waters. See Note. By the use of a similar figure, and, perhaps, referring to that, he here says that the judgment of God would overflow the army of the Assyrians; but that it would approach *only* to the neck, the head would still be spared; the commander and sovereign would not be destroyed. In accordance with this prediction, the angel in one night, as with an overflowing flood, cut off the army, and yet spared the sovereign, Sennacherib, who escaped with his life, (Isa. xxxvii. 36, 37)—a most striking fulfilment of the prediction. The word rendered "shall reach," *יָרָח*, properly means *shall divide*, or cut into two parts, (Gen. xxxiii. 1; Num. xxxi. 36, 42; Judges ix. 43;) and the idea here seems to be, that a man who is in the water seems to be *divided* into two parts, the part above, and the part in the water. ¶ *To sift the nations.* Doubtless many nations were laid under requisition to furnish an army so large as that of Sennacherib, as the kingdom of Assyria was made up of a number of vanquished and tributary people and provinces. The word rendered "to sift" refers to the act of winnowing, or

fanning grain, in which the grain is *tossed*, or thrown from the shovel into the air. As the chaff is driven away by the wind, so the nations in the army of Sennacherib would be scattered. ¶ *With the sieve of vanity.* That is, of emptiness or perdition; he would so scatter them that nothing would be left. ¶ *A bridle in the jaws of the people.* The idea is, that he had all these nations as much under his control as a man has a horse who has a bridle in his mouth, and that he would guide them as he pleased. The same idea the prophet has used in reference to the same subject in ch. xxxvii. 29:

I will put my bridle in thy jaws,  
And I will turn thee back by the way by  
which thou camest.

¶ *Causing them to err.* That shall lead them astray, or cause them to wander; that is, he would turn them from the path in which they had designed to go. They had purposed to go to Jerusalem, but he would lead them *back* to their own land discomfited and disheartened. See ch. xxxvii. 29.

29. *Ye shall have a song.* That is, ye Jews, ye inhabitants of Jerusalem shall rejoice when the army of the Assyrian is destroyed. ¶ *As in the night when a holy solemnity is kept.* The word *solemnity* here, *מִצְוָה*, denotes a festival, or feast; and refers, by way of eminence, to the Passover, which is usually designated as *THE feast*; that is, the principal festival of the Jews. See Matt. xxvii. 15; John v. 1; ii. 13, 23. This festival was celebrated at first at night, and was required to be so cele-

30. And the LORD shall cause <sup>1</sup> his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

31. For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be

<sup>1</sup> the glory of his voice.

beaten down, which smote with a rod.

32. And <sup>2</sup> in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the LORD shall <sup>3</sup> lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight <sup>4</sup> with it.

<sup>2</sup> every passing of the rod founded.

<sup>3</sup> cause to rest.

<sup>4</sup> or, against them.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

30. And JEHOVAH shall cause his glorious voice to be heard,  
And will cause the descent of his arm to be seen,  
With the indignation of his wrath, and a flame of consuming fire,  
With a flood, and showers, and hail-stones.
31. And by the voice of JEHOVAH shall the Assyrian be beaten down,  
He that smote with a rod.
32. And every place on which the appointed rod shall pass,  
On which JEHOVAH shall lay it heavily,  
Shall [rejoice] with tabrets and harps,  
And with fierce battles shall he fight against it.

brated ever afterwards. Ex. xii. 42; Deut. xvi. 1—6. ¶ *As when one goeth with a pipe.* Music was used in the constant service of the temple, and their processions and celebrations were all with instrumental music. The simple idea is, that the sudden and complete destruction of the army of Sennacherib would be the occasion of the highest joy and praise.

30. *And the LORD shall cause, &c.* The prophet here returns to a description of the destruction of the army of the Assyrian. ¶ *His glorious voice, &c.* That is, he would give command to destroy them. They could not fail to recognise his voice, and to feel that it was accomplished by him. ¶ *The lighting down of his arm.* The descent of his arm—alluding to the act of striking, as with a sword, by which an army is cut down. ¶ *With the flame, &c.* See Note on ch. xxix. 6.

31. *For through the voice of the LORD.* By the command of the Lord; that is, his voice going forth in the manner specified in ver. 30. ¶ *Which smote with a rod.* Who was accustomed to

smite as with a rod; that is, his government was tyrannical and severe. As he had been accustomed to smite in that manner, so should he now meet the proper reward of his oppression of the nations.

32. *And in every place.* Marg., “Every passing of the rod founded.” Lowth renders it, “whenever shall pass the rod of correction.” The whole design of the passage is evidently to foretell the sudden destruction of the army of the Assyrians, and to show that this would be accomplished by the agency of God. The idea seems to be, that in all those places where the rod of the Assyrian would pass, that is, where he would commit devastation and desolation, there should be the sound of rejoicing with instruments of music, when he should be overthrown. ¶ *The grounded staff.* The word “staff” here [rod] seems to refer to that by which the Assyrian smote the nations (ver. 31); or rather, perhaps, the Assyrian king himself as a rod of correction in the hand of JEHOVAH. Thus in ch. x. 5, God calls the Assyrian the rod of

33. For Tophet <sup>s</sup> is ordained <sup>1</sup> much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

g Jer. 7. 31.

<sup>1</sup> from yesterday.

A Rev. 14. 9, 10.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

33. For Tophet hath been already prepared:  
Yea, for the king was it fitted up;  
Deep and broad hath he made it;  
A pyre for the flame, and wood hath he prepared in abundance:—  
The breath of JEHOVAH, like a stream of sulphur, shall kindle it.

his anger, and the staff of his indignation. The word rendered "grounded," *מִסְכָּה*, has given great perplexity to commentators. Lowth supposes it should be *מִסְכָּה*, correction, according to a conjecture of Le Clerc. Two MSS. also read it in the same way. But the authority from the MSS. is not sufficient to justify a change in the present Hebrew text. This word, which is not very intelligibly rendered "grounded," is derived from *סָכַר*, to found, to lay the foundation of a building (Ezra iii. 12; Isa. liv. 11); then to establish, to appoint, to ordain. Hab. i. 12; Ps. civ. 8. So in Pi, to appoint, ordain. Ps. viii. 3. The idea here is, therefore, that the rod referred to had been appointed, constituted, ordained by God; that is, that the Assyrian had been designated by God to accomplish important purposes as a rod, or as a means of punishing the nations. See ch. x. 5. ¶ *Shall pass*. In his march of desolation and conquest. ¶ *Which the Lord shall lay upon him*. Or rather, as it should be translated, "upon which JEHOVAH should lay," i. e. the rod, meaning that in all those places where JEHOVAH should lay this appointed scourge, there would be yet rejoicing. ¶ *It shall be with tabrets and harps*. Those places where he had passed, and which he had scourged, should be filled with joy and rejoicing at his complete overthrow, and at their entire deliverance from the scourge. For a description of the tabret and harp, see Note on ch. v. 12. ¶ *And in battles of*

*shaking*. In the Hebrew there is an allusion here to what is said in ver. 28, that he would "sift," that is, agitate, or toss the nations as in a winnowing shovel. ¶ *Will he fight with it*. Marg., "against them." JEHOVAH would fight against the "rod," to wit, the Assyrian, and destroy him. See ch. xxxvii. 36.

33. *For Tophet*. The same idea is conveyed in this verse as in the preceding, but under another form, and with a new and striking illustration. The sense is, that the army of the Assyrians would be completely destroyed, as if it were a large pile of wood in the valley of Hinnom that should be fired by the breath of God. The language is all figurative, and is designed to denote that the army of the Assyrian would be totally overcome and destroyed. The word *Tophet*, *תּוֹפֶת*, with *ה* paragogic, denotes, properly, what causes loathing, or abhorrence; that which produces disgust and vomiting (from the Chaldee, *תּוֹפּ*, *Tuph*, to spit out); Job xvii. 6, "I was an abhorrence," *תּוֹפּ*, (improperly rendered in our version, "I was among them as a tabret"). The word occurs only in 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. vii. 31, 32; xix. 6, 13, 14, 11, and in this place. It is applied to a deep valley on the south-east of Jerusalem, celebrated as the seat of idolatry, particularly of the worship of Moloch. The name also of "the valley of Hinnom" was given to it; and hence the name *Gehennah* (*γέεννα*, Matt. v. 22, 29, 30; x. 28; xviii. 9; xxiii. 15, 33; Mark ix. 43, 45, 47; Luke xii. 5; Luke xiii. 32).



James iii. 6), as denoting the place of future torments, of which the valley of Hinnom, or Tophet, was a striking emblem. This valley was well watered, and was formerly most fertile, and delightfully shaded with trees. It was early selected, however, as the seat of the worship of Moloch, where his rites were celebrated by erecting a huge brazen image with a hollow trunk and arms, which was heated, and within which, or on the arms of which, children were placed as a sacrifice to the horrid idol. To drown their cries, drums were beaten, which were called תֹּפֶן, *Toph*, or תֹּפִים, *Tophim*, and hence many suppose the name Topheth was given to the place. See 2 Kings xvi. 3; xxi. 6; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6. The name valley of Hinnom, or Gehennah, was probably from the former possessor or occupier of that name. In subsequent times, however, this place was regarded with deep abhorrence. It became the receptacle of all the filth of the city; and hence in order to purify the atmosphere, and prevent contagion, it was needful to keep fires there continually burning. It became thus a most striking emblem of hell-fire; and as such is used in the New Testament. Hezekiah was deeply opposed to idolatry; and it is not improbable that he had removed the images of Moloch, and made it the receptacle of filth, and a place of abomination, and that the prophet refers to this fact in the passage before us. ¶ *Is ordained.* Was fitted up, appointed, constituted. The prophet by a figure represents Hezekiah as having fitted up this place as if for the appropriate punishment of the Assyrians. ¶ *Of old.* Marg., as in the Heb., "from yesterday." This expression may mean simply, "formerly, some time since," as in Ex. iv. 10; 2 Sam. iii. 17. The idea here seems to be, that Tophet had been formerly, or was already prepared as if expressly for the destruction of Sennacherib and his army. It was an appropriate and striking representation of the suddenness and completeness of his ruin. It would be as certain, and as sudden, as

if in the valley of Tophet, where vast materials had been collected, and were ready to be kindled, the breath of JEHOVAH should set it on fire. It does not mean that Tophet had actually been prepared for the army of Sennacherib; it does not mean that his army would actually be destroyed there—for it was on the other side of the city that they were cut off (see Notes on ch. x. 32); it does not mean that they would be consigned to hell-fire;—but it means that that place had been fitted up as if to be an emblematic representation of his ruin; that the consuming fires in that valley were a striking representation of the sudden and awful manner in which the abhorred enemies of God and his people would be destroyed. ¶ *For the king it is prepared.* For Hezekiah; as if the place had been fitted up for his use in order to consume and destroy his enemies. It is not meant that Hezekiah actually had this in view, but the whole language is figurative. It was as if that place had been fitted up by Hezekiah as a suitable place in which entirely to destroy his foes. ¶ *He hath made.* Hezekiah has made it. ¶ *Deep and large.* Vast; as if able to contain the entire army that was to be destroyed. ¶ *The pile thereof.* The wood that was collected there to be consumed. ¶ *The breath of the LORD.* As if JEHOVAH should breathe upon it, and fire the whole mass, so that it should burn without the possibility of being extinguished. The meaning is, that the destruction of the Assyrian would as really come from JEHOVAH as if he should by his own agency ignite the vast piles that were collected in the valley of Hinnom. ¶ *Like a stream of brimstone.* Brimstone or sulphur is used in the Scriptures to denote a fire of great intensity, and one that cannot be extinguished. Gen. xix. 24; Ps. xi. 6; Ezek. xxxviii. 22; Rev. ix. 17, 18. Hence it is used to denote the eternal torments of the wicked in hell. Rev. xxi. 8; xiv. 10; xix. 20. ¶ *Doth kindle it.* The army of the Assyrian would be destroyed in a manner which would be well represented by JEHOVAH's sending down upon a vast pile

## CHAPTER XXXI.

1. Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because *they are many*; and in horse-

men, because they are very strong; but <sup>a</sup> they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the

a Hos. 7. 7.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

VISION XXVI.—Ch. xxxi. *The alliance with Egypt.*

1. Woe unto them who go down to Egypt for help;  
And put their trust in horses,  
And confide in chariots because they are many,  
And in horsemen, because they are very strong.  
But they look not unto the Holy One of Israel,  
And they do not seek JEHOVAH.

collected in the valley of Hinnom a burning stream of sulphurous flame that should ignite and consume all before it. The meaning of the whole passage is, that the army of the Assyrian would be suddenly and totally destroyed. The figure used constitutes a most striking emblematic representation of the punishment of the wicked in hell; and as such it is employed in the New Testament.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## ANALYSIS.

It is evident\* that this chapter was composed at about the same time as the preceding, and relates to the same subject. The general object, like the former, is to dissuade the Jews from their contemplated alliance with Egypt, and to persuade them to rely on God. In doing this, the prophet first denounces a woe on those who went down to Egypt to seek aid (ver. 1); he then states that God will punish them for it (ver. 2); he then urges, in strong language, the utter inability of the Egyptians to furnish the aid which was needed, since JEHOVAH was about to stretch out his arm over them also, and they as well as those who sought their aid should suffer under his displeasure. ver. 3. The prophet then, in order to recal them from this contemplated alliance, and to induce them to put confidence in JEHOVAH, assures them, by

two most beautiful and striking figures (vs. 4, 5), that God would protect their city in the threatened invasion, and save it from destruction. He calls on them, therefore (ver. 6), to turn unto God; assures them (ver. 7) that at that time every man would see the folly of trusting in idols; and finally (vs. 8, 9), assures them of the complete overthrow of the army of the Assyrian. The scope of the prophecy is, therefore, simple and direct; the argument condensed, striking, and beautiful. It is not improbable, by any means, that these exhortations of Isaiah had a sensible effect on the conduct of Hezekiah. The whole narrative respecting the invasion of Sennacherib would lead to the conclusion that at first Hezekiah himself joined in the purpose of seeking the alliance with Egypt, but that he was afterwards led to abandon it, and to use all his influence to induce also his people to rely on the aid of God. Comp. ch. xxxvi. ver. 6, with ver. 18.

1. Woe. Note, ch. xxx. ver. 1. ¶ *To them that go down to Egypt.* Note, ch. xxx. 2. ¶ *And stay on horses.* See Note on ch. xxx. 16. ¶ *And trust in chariots.* See Note, ch. xxi. 7. That they were often used in war is apparent from the following places. Josh. xi. 4; Judges, i. 19; 1 Sam. xiii. 5; 2 Sam. viii. 4. ¶ *Because they are many.* Because they hope to secure the aid of many. See

2. Yet he also *is* wise, and will bring evil, and will not <sup>1</sup> call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity.

3. Now the Egyptians *are* men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail to-

gether.

4. For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion <sup>b</sup> and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, *he* will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the <sup>1</sup> noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

<sup>b</sup> Hos. 11. 10.

<sup>1</sup> or, *multitude*.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

2. Yet he, too, is wise;  
He will bring evil, and will not recal his words;  
He will arise against the house of the wicked,  
And against the help of them that do iniquity.
3. And the Egyptians are men, and not GOD;  
And their horses are flesh, and not spirit.  
And JEHOVAH shall stretch out his hand,  
And the helper shall fall, and the helped shall be overthrown,  
And they shall both fail together.
4. For thus hath JEHOVAH said unto me,  
As the lion and the young lion roar over their prey,  
When a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him,

the references above. It is evident that their confidence in them would be in proportion to the number which they could bring into the field. ¶ *But they look not, &c.* Note, ch. xxx. 1.

2. *Yet he also is wise.* God is wise. He cannot be imposed on. It is in vain to attempt to deceive him, or to accomplish their purposes without his knowledge. ¶ *And will bring evil.* The punishment which is due to such want of confidence in him. ¶ *But will arise, &c.* That is, he will certainly inflict punishment on them. ¶ *The house of the evildoers.* This is a general proposition; and it is evidently just as true now as it was in the time of Isaiah.

3. *Now the Egyptians are men.* They are nothing but men; they have no power but such as other men possess. The idea here is, that the case in reference to which they sought aid, was one

in which *divine* help was indispensable; and that, therefore, they relied on the aid of the Egyptians in vain. ¶ *And their horses flesh, and not spirit.* That is, they are not endued with an immortal nature; they are corruptible, and easily destroyed. As they are not intelligent, therefore, and immortal; as they are and must be under the control of man himself, it is foolish and vain to put trust in them. There is need, not merely of *physical* strength, but there is need of wisdom and counsel, and it is in vain to look for that in mere brutes. ¶ *Both he that helpeth.* Egypt; whose aid is sought. ¶ *And he that is holpen.* Judah; that had sought the aid of Egypt. Neither of them would be able to stand against the wrath of God.

4. *For thus hath the LORD spoken, &c.* The design of this verse and the following is, to assure the Jews of the cer-

5. As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend <sup>c</sup> Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.

<sup>c</sup> Ps. 46. 5.

NEW TRANSLATION.

At their voice he will not be terrified,  
Nor at their multitude be disheartened;  
So shall JEHOVAH of hosts come down to fight  
For Mount Zion and her hill.

5. As birds flying, so will JEHOVAH of hosts defend Jerusalem.

tain protection of JEHOVAH; and thus to induce them to put their trust in him rather than to seek the alliance with Egypt. To do this the prophet makes use of two striking illustrations, the first of which is, that JEHOVAH would be no more alarmed at the number and power of their enemies, than a fierce lion would be who was intent on his prey, and could not be frightened from it by any number of men that should come against him. The point of this comparison is, that as the lion that was intent on his purpose could not be frightened from it by numbers, so it would be with JEHOVAH, who was equally intent on his purpose—the defence of the city of Jerusalem. It does not mean, of course, that the purpose of God and of the lion resembled each other, but merely, that there was similar intensity of purpose, and similar adherence to it, notwithstanding all opposition. JEHOVAH would be just as intent on the defence of Jerusalem as the lion was in securing his prey. The figure, therefore, is one that denotes the highest vigilance, firmness, steadiness, and determination, on the part of JEHOVAH, that Jerusalem should not fall into the hands of the Assyrians. ¶ *Like as the lion.* The divine nature and purposes are often represented in the Scriptures by metaphors, allégories, and comparisons taken from animals, and especially from the lion. See Hos. xi. 10; Deut. xxxiii. 20; Job x. 16; Ps. vii. 2. ¶ *And the young lion.* The vigorous, strong, fierce lion. The use of the two here gives intensity and strength to the comparison. It is observable that the lion is seldom mentioned alone in the Scriptures. ¶ *Roaring on his prey.*

Roaring as he seizes on his prey. This is the moment of the greatest intensity of purpose in the lion, and when nothing can divert him from it; and it is, therefore, used by Isaiah to denote the intense purpose of JEHOVAH to defend Jerusalem, and not to be deterred by any number of enemies. ¶ *When a multitude of shepherds, &c.* This comparison is almost exactly in the spirit and language of Homer, Iliad. xii. 209, seq.

“So pressed with hunger from the mountain’s brow,  
Descends a lion on the flocks below;  
So stalks the lordly savage o’er the plain,  
In sullen majesty and stern disdain:  
In vain loud mastiffs bay him from afar,  
And shepherds gall him with an iron war;  
Regardless, furious, he pursues his way;  
He foams, he roars, he rends the panting prey.”  
POPE.

So also Iliad. xviii. 161, 162:

“—But checked he turns; repulsed attacks again.  
With fiercer shouts his lingering troops he fires,  
Nor yields a step, nor from his post retires;  
So watchful shepherds strive to force in vain  
The hungry lion from the carcase slain.”  
POPE.

¶ *Is called forth.* When the neighborhood is alarmed, and all the inhabitants turn out to destroy him. ¶ *He will not be afraid, &c.* He will be so intent on his prey that he will not heed their shouting. ¶ *Nor abase himself.* That is, he will not be frightened or disheartened. ¶ *So shall the LORD of hosts, &c.* That is, with the same intensity of purpose; with the same fixedness of design. He will be as little dismayed and diverted from his purpose by the number, the designs, and the war-shout of the Assyrian armies.

5. As birds flying. This is another

6. Turn <sup>d</sup> ye unto *him* and <sup>1</sup> his idols of gold, which *your* own hands have made unto *you* deeply <sup>c</sup> revolted. <sup>a</sup> a sin.

7. For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, 8. Then shall the Assyrian fall <sup>f</sup> with the sword, not of a mighty <sup>1</sup> the idols of his gold. <sup>f</sup> ch. 37. 36.

<sup>d</sup> Jer. 3. 12.

<sup>c</sup> Hos. 9. 9.

<sup>1</sup> the idols of his gold.

<sup>f</sup> ch. 37. 36.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

Defending, he will deliver it,

Sparing, he will preserve it.

6. Return to him from whom ye have so deeply revolted,  
O children of Israel!

7. For in that day shall every man cast away with contempt  
His idols of silver, and his idols of gold;  
The sin which your own hands have made.

8. Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword—not of a mighty man;  
And the sword—not of a mean man—shall devour him;  
And he shall betake himself to flight from the face of the sword,  
And his young men shall melt away.

comparison indicating substantially the same thing as the former, that JEHOVAH would protect Jerusalem. The idea here is, evidently, that JEHOVAH would protect Jerusalem in the same manner as birds defend their young by hovering over them, securing them under their wings, and leaping forward, if they are suddenly attacked, to defend them. Our Saviour has used a similar figure to indicate his readiness to have defended and saved the same city, (Matt. xxiii. 37,) and it is possible that he may have had this passage in his eye. The phrase, "birds flying," may mean to denote the *rapidity* with which birds fly to defend their young, and hence the *rapidity* with which God would come to defend Jerusalem; or it may more properly, I think, refer to the fact that birds, when their young are attacked, fly or flutter around them to defend them; they will not leave them. The figure is a striking one; and the idea here may be, as in the previous figure, the courage, the fixed, determined purpose with which God would defend Jerusalem. ¶ And *passing over*. חַסְפָּה. Lowth renders this, "leaping forward." This word, which is usually applied in some of its forms to the Passover, (Ex. xii. 13, 23, 27;

2 Chron. xxx. 18; Num. ix. 4; Josh. v. 11) properly means, as a verb, to *pass over*; and hence to preserve or spare. It means here, I think, simply to preserve; and I see no evidence that the idea which Lowth supposes to be attached to it is correct. The idea in the passage is, that JEHOVAH would protect Jerusalem, as a bird defends its young.

6. *Turn ye unto him.* In view of the fact that he will assuredly defend Jerusalem, commit yourselves unto him rather than seek the aid of Egypt. ¶ *Have deeply revolted.* For the meaning of this phrase, see Note, ch. xxix. 15.

7. *For in that day.* That is, in the invasion of Sennacherib, and the events that shall be consequent thereon. ¶ *Every man shall cast away his idols, &c.* See Note, ch. xxx. 22. Comp. Note, ch. ii. 20. ¶ *For a sin.* Or rather, the sin which your own hands have made. The sense is, that the making of those idols had been a sin, or sin itself. It had been the sin by way of eminence which was chargeable upon them.

8. *Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword.* The sword is often used as an instrument of punishment or ven-

and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee <sup>1</sup> from the sword, and his young men shall be <sup>2</sup> discomfited.

<sup>1</sup> or, for fear of.

<sup>2</sup> for melting, or, tribute, or, tributary.

9. And <sup>3</sup> he shall pass over to his <sup>4</sup> strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> his rock shall pass away for fear.

<sup>4</sup> or, strength.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

9. And he shall pass on beyond his strong hold for fear;  
And his princes shall be struck with consternation at his standard,  
Saith JEHOVAH, who hath his fire in Zion,  
And his furnace in Jerusalem.

geance. It is not meant here literally that the sword would be used, but it is employed to denote that complete destruction would come upon them.

¶ *Not of a mighty man.* The idea here is, that the army should not fall by man; but that it should be done by the direct interposition of God. See ch. xxxvii.

36. ¶ *Of a mean man.* Of a man of humble rank. His army shall not be slain by the hand of mortals. This was fulfilled in a striking manner; and the design of the statement is to show them that it was improper on all accounts to seek an alliance with Egypt. ¶ *But he shall flee.* The Assyrian monarch escaped when his army was destroyed, and fled towards his own land; ch. xxxvii.

37. ¶ *From the sword.* Marg., for fear of. The Heb. is, "from the face of the sword;" and the sense is, that he would flee before the destruction of his host, here represented as destroyed by the sword of JEHOVAH. ¶ *And his young men.* The flower and strength of his army. ¶ *Shall be discomfited.* Marg., "for melting, or tribute, or tributary."

לִּמְסָה. LXX, "for destruction," εἰς ἡττῆμα. The Hebrew word, מָסָה, *māsā*, derived probably from מָסַח, *māsāh*, to melt away, to dissolve, is most usually employed to denote *tribute*; a levy, fine, or tax—so called, says Taylor, because it *wastes* or *exhausts* the substance and strength of a people. The word is often used to denote that *men* should become tributary, or *vas-*

sals, as in Gen. xlix. 15; Deut. xx. 11. Comp. 1 Kings v. 13; Est. x. 1; 2 Sam. xx. 24; 1 Kings iv. 6; Josh. xvi. 10. Probably it does not here mean that the strength of the Assyrian army would become literally tributary to the Jews, but that they would be *as if* they had been placed under a levy or tribute to them; their vigor and strength would melt away, as property and numbers do under taxation and tribute.

9. *And he shall pass over.* Marg., "His rock shall pass away for fear." The Hebrew would bear this, but it does not convey a clear idea. The sense seems to be this. The word rendered "strong hold," (Heb., his rock,) evidently denotes his fortifications or places of strength in which he trusted. Probably the Assyrian monarch had many such places which he regarded as perfectly safe and secure, both in the limits of his own kingdom, and on the line of his march towards Judea. Those places would naturally be made strong and secure, in order to afford a refuge in case of a defeat or a failure in the expedition. The idea here is, that so great would be his alarm at the sudden destruction of his army, and the failure of his plans, that in his flight he would *pass over* or *beyond* these strong places; he would not even stop to take refuge there and reorganize his scattered forces, but would flee with alarm *beyond* them, and make his way to his own capital. This appears to have been most strikingly fulfilled. See ch. xxxvii.

37. ¶ *And his princes.* Those, perhaps, that ruled over his dependent provinces. ¶ *Shall be afraid of the ensign.* That is, probably, of any standard or banner that they saw. They would suppose that it was the standard of an enemy. This denotes a state of great consternation and alarm, when all the princes and nobles under the command of the Assyrian would be filled with fright, and be completely dismayed. ¶ *Whose fire is in Zion, &c.* That is, whose altar is there, and always burns there. That was the place where he was worshipped, and it was a place, therefore, which he would defend. The meaning is, that they would be as certainly destroyed as the God whose altar was in Jerusalem was a God of truth, and would defend the place where he was worshipped. ¶ *And his furnace, &c.* See Note, ch. xxix. 1. Where his altar continually burns. The word rendered "furnace," (פֶּחַל), means, properly, a *baking oven*. Ex. viii. 3; Lev. ii. 4; vii. 9; xi. 35. This was either a large conical pot, which was heated, in which the cakes were baked at the sides; or an excavation made in the earth, which was heated by putting wood in it, and when that was removed the dough was put in it.—Perhaps the whole idea here is, that JEHOVAH had a home in Jerusalem, with the usual appendages of a house; that his fire and his oven were there—an expression descriptive of a dwelling-place. If so, then the idea is, that he would defend his own home, and that the Assyrian could not expect to prevail against it.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### ANALYSIS.

This chapter is evidently closely connected with the preceding, and has been regarded by many as a continuation and conclusion of the prediction there commenced. Though it was, however, probably uttered at about the same time, and with reference to the same general subject, yet there is no impropriety in its being separated into a distinct chapter. It is complete in itself,

and may possibly not have been uttered at precisely the same time as the preceding. The previous chapter closes with a prediction that the Assyrian army, which had been so much the object of dread, should be totally destroyed. This would be of course followed with important consequences, some of which are depicted in this chapter. The prophet, therefore, states (vs. 1—8) that the defeat of Sennacherib would be followed by the peaceful and prosperous state of the kingdom under a righteous prince; under whose reign there should be ample protection (ver. 2); at which time the advantages of instruction should prevail, and the ignorant should be enlightened (vs. 3, 4); when there should be a proper estimate put on moral worth, and when illiberality, hypocrisy, and falsehood should be no longer held in repute, but should be abhorred (vs. 6, 7); and when the character of the nation should be that of a people which devised and executed large and liberal purposes (ver. 8). That this has a reference to the reign of Hezekiah has been abundantly shown by Vitringa; and indeed must be obvious on the slightest inspection. For (1.) It is immediately connected with the account of the destruction of Sennacherib, and evidently means that the state of things here described would immediately succeed that. (2.) There is nothing in the account that does not fully accord with the prosperous and happy times of the reign of Hezekiah. (3.) There are statements in it which cannot be applied directly or with propriety literally to the times of the Messiah. For example, the statement (ver. 1), that "princes shall rule in righteousness," cannot be applied with any propriety to the apostles; since they are not anywhere designated by that name. That, after the usual manner of Isaiah, he might not also in the progress of his description have glanced at the times of the Messiah, perhaps there can be no reason to doubt. But the main and leading purpose was doubtless to present a description of the happy times that should succeed the destruction of the army of the Assyrian. Calvin su

## CHAPTER XXXII.

righteousness, \* and princes shall

1. Behold, a king shall reign in

α Ps. 45. 6, 7. Jer. 23. 5, 6.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

VISION XXVII.—Ch. xxxii. *The reign of Hezekiah.*

1. Behold! a king shall reign in righteousness;  
And princes shall rule in equity.

poses, not improbably, I think, that this prophecy may have been uttered in the time of Ahaz, in whose reign wickedness so much abounded, and ignorance and idolatry so much prevailed. But whether the prophecy was actually uttered in the time of Ahaz or not—which cannot now be determined—yet it may have been uttered in view of the ignorance, and superstition, and hypocrisy which prevailed in his reign, and which extended their influence into the time of his successor, and on account of which the nation was to be subjected to the calamities arising from the invasion of Sennacherib. After that, the king Hezekiah should reign in righteousness, and his kingdom should enjoy the blessings of his mild and virtuous reign.

The prophet then (vs. 10—14) proceeds to show that, *previous* to the happy and prosperous times predicted, there should be a state of desolation and alarm. This is indicated by his calling on the daughters of luxury and fashion, who were reposing in security and confidence, to rise up in consternation at the calamities which were impending, and which should certainly come upon them (vs. 10, 11), and by the assurance that there should be a time of want, and calamity, and desolation, when they would sigh for the luxuries which they had before enjoyed (vs. 12—14). This is descriptive of the calamities which would attend the invasion of the Assyrian. Yet the prophet says, as is usual with him, that these calamities would be succeeded by more happy times (vs. 15—20). They would continue until the Spirit should be poured out from on high (ver 15), and the result of this would be, the prevalence of righteous-

ness in the nation (ver. 16), and peace and safety (vs. 17, 18); there should be safety in a storm (ver. 19), and the privilege of pursuing the peaceful pursuits of agriculture, and of cultivating the entire land without molestation (ver. 20).

1. *Behold, a king.* That is, Hezekiah. That it refers to him is apparent from the connexion. The reign of Ahaz had been one of oppression and idolatry. This was to be succeeded by the reign of one under whom the rights of the people should be secured, and under whom there should be a state of general prosperity. This *may* have been uttered while Ahaz was on the throne; or it may have been when Hezekiah began to reign. Perhaps the latter is the more probable, as Ahaz might not have tolerated anything that would have looked like a reflection on his own reign; nor, perhaps, while he was on the throne would Isaiah have given a description that would have been a contrast between his reign and that of his successor. ¶ *Shall reign in righteousness.* That is, a righteous king shall reign; or his administration shall be one of justice, and strongly in contrast with that of his predecessor. This was certainly the general characteristic of the reign of Hezekiah. ¶ *And princes shall rule.* Heb., For princes, or, As to princes. לְנָשִׂים. Lowth proposes to read this without the ל, as the ancient versions do. But it is not necessary to change the text. It may be rendered, "As to princes, they shall rule," &c. Comp. Ps. xvi. 3. The "princes" here denote the various officers of government; or those to whom the administration was



2. And a man shall be as an rivers <sup>c</sup> of water in a dry place, hiding place from the wind, and a as the shadow of a <sup>1</sup> great rock in covert <sup>b</sup> from the tempest; as a weary land.

<sup>b</sup> ch. 4. 6.

<sup>c</sup> ch. 44. 3.

<sup>1</sup> heavy

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

2. And the man shall be as an hiding place from the wind,  
And a covert from the tempest;  
As rivers of water in a dry place,  
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

confided. ¶ *In judgment.* That this is a just description of the reign of Hezekiah is apparent from the history. See 2 Kings xviii. 3—6: "He removed the high places, and broke the images, and cut down the groves, &c. He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him, among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him, for he clave unto the LORD, and departed not from following him," &c.

2. *And a man.* And the man; that is, evidently, the man referred to in the previous verse—to wit, Hezekiah. ¶ *Shall be as an hiding place from the wind.* A place where one may take refuge from a violent wind and tempest. See Note, ch. xxv. 4. ¶ *A covert.* A place of shelter and security. Wind and tempest are emblematic of calamity and oppression; and the sense is, that Hezekiah would be the protector of his people, and save them from the agitations and calamities to which they had been subjected in former reigns. ¶ *As rivers of water, &c.* This figure is often used in Isaiah. See ch. xxxv. 6, 7. Notes, xli. 18. It means that the blessings of such a reign would be as grateful and refreshing as gushing fountains and running streams were to a weary and thirsty traveller. This image is very striking to those who are accustomed to traverse vast sandy deserts, and hence it is often used in the poetry of the East. Here it refers to the benefits that would be conferred by the reign of Hezekiah—a reign which, compared with that of his father, would be like a refreshing fountain to a weary pilgrim in a path-

less desert. ¶ *As the shadow of a great rock.* In eastern countries, in a burning desert of sand, nothing is more grateful than the cooling shade of a far projecting rock. It not only excludes the rays of the sun, but it has itself a refreshing coolness that is most grateful to a weary traveller. The same figure is often used by the classic writers. See Virgil, Georg. iii. 145; Hesiod, ii. 106. ¶ *In a weary land.* A land where there is fatigue and weariness. Probably here it is used to denote a desolate land; a land destitute of trees, and groves, and pleasant abodes; a land where one expects weariness and fatigue, without any refreshment and shelter. The following description from travels in Africa, will explain this:—"Well does the traveller remember a day in the wilds of Africa, where the country was chiefly covered with burning sand, when, scorched with the powerful rays of an almost vertical sun, the thermometer in the shade standing at 100°, he remembers long looking hither and thither for something that would afford protection from the almost insupportable heat, and where the least motion of air felt like a flame coming against the face. At length he espied a huge loose rock leaning against the front of a small cliff which faced the sun. At once he fled for refuge underneath its inviting shade. The coolness emitted from this rocky canopy he found exquisitely exhilarating. The wild beasts of the deserts were all fled to their dens, and the feathered songsters were all roosting among the thickest foliage they could find of the evergreen trees. The

3. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.

4. The heart also of the <sup>1</sup> rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak <sup>2</sup> plainly.

<sup>1</sup> *hasty.*

<sup>2</sup> *or, elegantly.*

NEW TRANSLATION.

3. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim,  
And the ears of them that hear shall attend.
4. And the heart of the rash shall understand knowledge,  
And the tongue of the stammerer shall hasten to speak clearly.
5. The fool shall no more be called liberal,  
Nor the covetous any more be said to be generous.

whole creation around seemed to groan, as if their vigor had been entirely exhausted. A small river was providentially at hand, to the side of which, after awhile, he ventured, and sipped a little of its cooling water, which tasted better than the best Burgundy, or the finest old Hock in the world. During all this enjoyment, the above apropos text was the interesting subject of the traveller's meditation; though the allusion, as a figure, must fall infinitely short of that which is meant to be prefigured by it." *Campbell.*

3. *And the eyes of them that see, &c.* The sense of the verse is, that there shall be, under the reign of this wise and pious prince, on the part of the prophets and teachers, a clear view of divine truth, on the part of the people who hear there shall be a disposition to hearken and to attend to it. The phrase "of them that see" refers probably to the *prophets*, as those who were called *seers* (Note, ch. xxix. 10; xxx. 10; comp. 1 Sam. ix. 9), or those who had *visions* (Note, ch. i. 1) of the things that God would communicate to men. The word rendered "be dim" (רְחֹלָה) is derived from רָאָה, which usually signifies to see, to look, but it also has a meaning similar to רָאָה, to spread over, to close, to make blind. Of this fact Lowth seems not to have been aware when he proposed, without the authority of any MS., to change the text. The sense is, that those who were prophets and religious teachers

should no more see obscurely, but should have clear and just views of divine truth. ¶ *And the ears of them that hear.* Of the people who were instructed by their religious teachers. ¶ *Shall hearken.* It shall be a characteristic of those times that they shall be disposed to attend to the truth of God. This was a striking characteristic of things during the latter part of the reign of Hezekiah.

4. *The heart also of the rash.* Marg., *hasty.* The Hebrew word denotes those who hasten; that is, those who are precipitate in forming a judgment, or deciding on a course of action. They do not take time to deliberate, and consequently they are led headlong into error, and into improper courses of life. ¶ *Shall understand knowledge.* They shall take time to deliberate; to look carefully at subjects; and they shall consequently form a more enlightened judgment. ¶ *And the tongue of the stammerers.* The *stammerers* (comp. Note, ch. xxviii. 11) seem here to denote those who had indistinct and confused views of subjects; or who were incapable of expressing clear and intelligible views of divine truth. ¶ *Shall be ready to speak plainly.* Marg., *elegantly.* The Hebrew is נִרְאָה, *clear, white*, usually applied to a bright, clear, white light. The sense is, that there should be no indistinctness or obscurity in their views and modes of utterance.

5. *The vile person, &c.* Heb., *fool.* But the connexion requires us to un-

6. For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause

d Jer. 13. 23.

the drink of the thirsty to fail.

7. The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when <sup>1</sup> the needy speaketh right.

<sup>1</sup> or, he speaketh against the poor in judgment.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

6. For the fool will speak folly,  
And his heart will work iniquity,  
In practising hypocrisy, and in uttering against JEHOVAH error;  
To exhaust the soul of the hungry,  
And to cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.
7. The instruments of the knave also are evil;

derstand this as the opposite of *liberal*; and it means a person, evidently, who is close, miserly, narrow-minded, covetous. This person is designated as a fool. ¶ *Shall be no more called liberal.* It is probable that under the reign of former princes, when all views of right and wrong had been perverted, men of unprincipled character had been the subjects of flattery, and names of virtue had been attributed to them by their friends and admirers. But it would not be so under the virtuous reign of the prince here celebrated. Things would be called by their right names; and flattery would not be allowed to attribute to men qualities which they did not possess. ¶ *Nor the churl.* The word *churl* means, properly, a rude, surly, ill-bred man; then a miser, a niggard. The Hebrew word means, properly, a deceiver, a fraudulent man. *Gesenius*. The word *avaricious*, however, seems to suit the connexion. Lowth renders it "niggard," Noyes, "crafty." ¶ *Bountiful.* Flattery shall no more ascribe to a miserly man a character which does not belong to him.

6. *For the vile person.* Heb., the fool. This word more properly expresses the idea than "vile person." The Hebrews used the name fool to denote not only one destitute of understanding, but a knave, a dishonest man—regarding sin as the highest folly. See 1 Sam. xxv.

25; 2 Sam. iii. 33; Job ii. 10. ¶ *Will speak villany.* Heb., will speak folly. That is, he will act in accordance with his nature; it is his nature to speak folly, and he will do it. Under a wicked and unjust administration such persons might be the subjects of flattery (ver. 5), and might be raised to office and power. But under the administration of a virtuous king they would not be admitted to favor; and the reason was, that they would act out their nature, and would corrupt all around them. A monarch, therefore, who regarded the honor of his own throne, and the welfare of his subjects, would exclude them from his counsels. ¶ *To make empty the soul of the hungry.* That is, he would deprive the hungry of that which was needful, and the thirsty of drink. Probably this refers to spiritual hunger and thirst; and means that such a person would, by his example and his errors, take away the means of knowledge from the people, and leave them to error, ignorance, and want. The sense is, that if such persons were raised to office they would corrupt the nation and destroy their confidence in God. And *this* was a reason why a virtuous prince would exclude them from any participation in his government.

7. *The instruments also.* In the Hebrew here there is a *paronomasia* which cannot be imitated in a translation. The word *instruments* here denotes evidently

8. But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand.
9. Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech.

1 or, be established.

e Amos 6. 1.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

He plotteth also mischievous devices,  
To destroy the poor with lying words,  
When the cause of the needy is just.

8. But the liberal deviseth liberal things,  
And by liberal things shall he be established.
9. O ye women that are at ease, rise up; hear my voice:  
Ye careless daughters, give ear to my speech.

*the means* by which the churl accomplishes his object,—whether it be by words, by judicial decisions, or by crafty devices. This is also a kind of proverbial expression, and is given as a further reason why such a person would not be employed by a wise and virtuous prince. ¶ *Are evil.* He will make use of any unprincipled means, any wicked plan or device, to accomplish his purpose. ¶ *With lying words.* With false representations; or with deceitful promises and assurances. His aim would be particularly directed to the poor and humble, as more easily deprived of their rights than the rich and powerful. It was also of greater importance to defend the rights of the poor, and therefore the prophet says that such a person should not be in the employ of a just and virtuous ruler. ¶ *Even when the needy speaketh right.* That is, although the cause of the needy is just; although his cause is one of truth and equity. When this would be manifest, the unprincipled man in power would deprive him of his rights, and therefore, under a wise and virtuous administration, such a person should not be employed.

8. *But the liberal.* This seems also to have the force of a proverbial expression. The word “liberal” means generous, noble, large-hearted, benevolent; a man of large views and of public spirit; a man above covetousness, and avarice, and self-seeking; a man who is willing to devote himself to the welfare of his country, and to the interests

of his fellow-men. It is implied here that such persons would be selected to administer the affairs of the government under the wise and virtuous prince of which the prophet speaks. ¶ *Deviseth liberal things.* He purposes those things which will tend to promote the public welfare, and not those merely which will conduce to his private ends and gratification. ¶ *And by liberal things shall he stand.* Marg., “be established.” That is, according to the connexion, he shall be confirmed, or approved in the government of the virtuous king referred to. It is, however, a proposition in a general form, and means also that a man by a liberal course shall be established; that is, his character, reputation, hopes, shall be established by it. His liberal course shall be an indication that he is approved of God; and his reputation, character, hopes, happiness, shall be confirmed and secure. This is true now. If a man wishes to obtain permanent peace and honor, the esteem of his fellow-men, or the evidence of divine approbation, it can be best secured by large and liberal schemes to advance the happiness of a dying world. A man who is avaricious and narrow-minded has no happiness, and no durable reputation; a man who is large-hearted and benevolent has the approbation of the wise and good, peace of conscience, the favor of God, and a firm and unshaken support in the trials of life, and in the agonies of death.

9. *Rise up, &c.* Rosenmüller supposes that this commences a new verse

10. Many <sup>1</sup> days and years—  
shall ye be troubled, ye careless  
women: for the vintage shall fail,  
the gathering shall not come.

<sup>1</sup> days above a year.

11. Tremble, ye women that  
are at ease; be troubled, ye care-  
less ones: strip you, and make you  
bare, and gird sackcloth upon  
your loins.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

10. Days beyond a year shall ye be troubled, ye careless women;  
For the vintage shall fail, the harvest shall not come.

11. Tremble, ye that are at ease!  
Be troubled, ye careless ones!  
Strip ye, make ye bare, gird ye sackcloth upon your loins!

or prophecy; and that the former part (vs. 9—14) refers to the desolation of Judea by the invasion of Sennacherib, and the latter (vs. 15—20) to the prosperity which would succeed that invasion, and the destruction of his army. It cannot be doubted that this is the general reference of the passage; but there does not seem to be a necessity of making a division here. The entire prophecy, including the whole chapter, relates in general to the reign of Hezekiah; and as these events were to occur during his reign, the prophet groups them all together, and presents them as constituting important events in his reign. The general design of *this* portion of the prophecy (vs. 9—14) is, to show the desolation that would come upon the cities and the land of Judea in consequence of that invasion. This he represents in a poetical manner, by calling on the gay and thoughtless women—the daughters of fashion and ease—to arouse, since all their comforts were to be taken away in consequence of this threatened invasion. ¶ *Ye women that are at ease.* They who are surrounded by the comforts which affluence gives, and that have no fear of being reduced to want. Comp. ch. iii. 16—26. ¶ *Ye careless daughters.* Heb. “daughters confiding;” that is, those who felt no alarm, and who did not regard God and his threatenings.

10. *Many days and years.* Marg., “days above a year.” This is a literal translation of the Hebrew. LXX, “Make mention of a day of a year in sorrow, with hope.” Targum, “Days with years.” Kimchi supposes it means

“two years.” Grotius supposes it means “within three years.” Various other interpretations may be seen in Pool’s Synopsis. Gesenius renders it “for a year’s time,” according to the vulgar expression “a year and a day,” denoting a complete year; and supposes that it means a considerable time, a long period. The phrase literally means “the days upon [or beyond] a year,” and may denote a long time; many days; as the entire days in a year would denote a long period of suffering. Lowth renders it, not in accordance with the Hebrew, “years upon years.” Noyes, “one year more, and ye shall tremble.” *Perhaps* this expresses the sense; and *then* it would denote not the length of time which they would suffer, but would indicate that the calamities were just at hand, and would soon come upon them. The general idea is plain, that calamity and want would inevitably come upon them; and probably that which is denoted is, that it would occur in consequence of the invasion of the Assyrians. ¶ *For the vintage shall fail.* A large part of the wealth and the luxury of the nation consisted in the vintage. When the vine failed, there would be, of course, great distress. The sense is, that in consequence of the invasion of the Assyrians, either the people would neglect to cultivate the lands, or that they would fail to collect the harvest. This might occur either from the dread of the invasion, or because the Assyrian would destroy everything in his march.

11. *Strip you, and make you bare.* That is, take off your gay and splendid apparel, and put on the habiliments of

12. They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant <sup>1</sup> fields, for the fruitful vine.

13. Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns <sup>1</sup> and briers; <sup>2</sup> yea, upon all the houses

<sup>1</sup> fields of desire.

f Hos. 10. 8. <sup>2</sup> or, burning upon.

of joy in the joyous city:

14. Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts <sup>3</sup> and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;

<sup>3</sup> or, cliffs and watchtowers.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

12. Mourning for the fertile grounds,

For the pleasant fields,

For the fruitful vine.

13. Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers:

Yea, in all the houses of joy in the joyous city.

14. For the palace is deserted; the tumultuous city is left;

The fortified hall, and the towers shall be dens for ever—

The joy of wild asses, a pasture for flocks;

mourning, indicative of a great calamity. ¶ *And gird sackcloth, &c.* See Note, ch. iii. 24.

12. *They shall lament for the teats.* Interpreters have been not a little perplexed by this expression. Lowth supposes it is to be taken in connexion with the previous verse, and that it denotes that sackcloth was to be girded upon the loins, and upon the breasts. Others have supposed that it denotes to "smite upon the breasts;" others, to wound or lacerate the breast, as a token of grief; others, that the word "breast" here denotes children, by a *synecdoche*, as having been nourished by the breast, and that the women here were called to mourn over their children. But it is evident, I think, that the word *breasts* here is used to denote fertility, or that which nourishes or sustains life, and is synonymous with fruitful fields. It is so used in Homer, (*Iliad*. ix. 141,) where *οὐδ' ἂν ἀρούρης* denotes fertility of land. And here the sense doubtless is, that they would mourn over the fields that were once so productive, and that contributed to sustain life, but which were now desolate. So it is understood by Gesenius and Rosenmüller. In regard to the grammatical difficulties of the place, Rosenmüller and Gesenius may be consulted. ¶ *The pleasant fields.* Marg., as in the Hebrew, "fields of desire."

13. *Upon the land of my people.* Upon Judea. A description similar to this in regard to the consequences of the invasion of Sennacherib is given in ch. vii. 20—25. See Notes on that passage. ¶ *Yea, upon all the houses of joy.* Margin, "Or, burning upon." The marginal reading has originated from the supposition that the word *יָ* is derived from *בָּרַךְ*, to be burned, and that it here means burning, or consumption. This conjecture has been adopted by Junius and Tremellius, and by some others. But it is evidently mere conjecture, and is not demanded. The word "yea" here will express the sense, meaning that desolation indicated by the growth of thorns and briers, would come upon the cities that were then filled with joy. This does not refer to Jerusalem, which was not taken by Sennacherib, but to the other cities that were destroyed by him in his march; and this account accords with the statement in ch. vii. 20—25.

14. *Because the palaces, &c.* That is, the palaces in the cities and towns which Sennacherib would lay waste. Or, if it refers, as Lowth supposes, to the invasion of the land in some future time, to the time of the Chaldeans, then it relates to the palaces in Jerusalem. Vitringa supposes that the temple at Jerusalem is particularly designated by

15. Until the Spirit <sup>g</sup> be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and <sup>a</sup> the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

*g* Joel 2. 28.

*a* Ps. 107. 23, &c.

NEW TRANSLATION.

15. Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high  
And the wilderness become a fruitful field,  
And the fruitful field be esteemed a forest.

the word rendered *palaces*. But that is not the usual word to denote the temple; and it is not necessary to suppose that that is particularly referred to. The word *מִצְדָּה* usually denotes a *palace*, or royal residence in some part of the royal citadel. See Isa. xxv. 2; Jer. xxx. 18; Amos i. 4, 7, 10, 12; 1 Kings xvi. 18. ¶ *The forts*. Marg., "cliffs and watchtowers." Heb., *עֶרֶב*, *ophel*. This word properly denotes a hill, or a cliff, such as is an advantageous situation for fortresses. It is translated in Micah iv. 8, "the strong-hold;" in 2 Kings v. 24, "the tower;" in 2 Chron. xxvii. 3; Neh. iii. 27; xi. 21, "Ophel;" also in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 14. With the article (*THE hill*) it was given by way of eminence to a cliff or hill on the eastern part of Mount Zion, which was surrounded and fortified with a wall. Josephus' Jewish Wars, vi. 6. It may be used here, however, to denote a hill or cliff, a strongly fortified place in general, without supposing of necessity that it refers to the mountain in Jerusalem. ¶ *Towers*. Towers were erected on the walls of cities, at convenient distances, for purposes of observation. ¶ *Shall be for dens*. Shall become places where banditti and robbers may abide, and secure themselves. ¶ *For ever*. This is evidently one instance in which the word "for ever," *לְעוֹלָם*, denotes a *long time*, because in the verse following there is a *period* specified when the desolation would terminate. When the word is used without any such limitation, it denotes, properly, eternity. Here it is used, because to those who were suffering under the desolation it would *seem* that it would never terminate; it would be long and

tedious. ¶ *A joy of wild asses*. A place where wild asses and other animals will have unlimited range.

15. *Until the Spirit*. The Spirit of God, as the source of all blessings, and especially as able to meet and remove the ills of the long calamity and desolation. This evidently refers to some future period, when the evils which the prophet was contemplating should be succeeded by prosperity, and by the spread of the true religion. If the prophet meant to confine his description of calamities to those which would attend the invasion of Sennacherib, then this refers to the piety and prosperity which would prevail after that, during the reign of Hezekiah. If he designed, as Lowth supposes, to describe the calamities which would attend the invasion of the Chaldeans, and the desolation of the city of Jerusalem during the captivity, then this refers to the prosperous times that would occur after their return to their own land. And if he looked forward beyond even that, then this refers to the times of the Messiah also, and he designed to describe the happy period when the Messiah should have come, and when the Spirit should be poured out. Vitringa supposes that all three of these events are referred to. But although the *expressions* are such as are used in reference to the times of the Messiah, yet the word "until" seems to limit the prediction to some event previous to that. The plain sense of the passage is, that the desolations spoken of would continue; the city would lie waste, and would be a pasture for flocks *until* the Spirit should be poured out; that is, would lie waste a long time, and then be succeeded by the merciful interposition of God restoring

16. Then judgment shall dwell and assurance for ever.

in the wilderness, and righteousness shall remain in the fruitful field. 18. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable<sup>k</sup> habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;

17. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; <sup>l</sup> and the effect of righteousness quietness

† Ps. 85. 10. James 3. 18.

‡ Heb. 4. 9.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

16. Then justice shall dwell in the wilderness,  
And righteousness shall inhabit the fruitful field.
17. And the work of righteousness shall be peace,  
And the effect of righteousness quiet and security for ever.
18. And my people shall abide in a habitation of peace,  
And in secure dwellings,  
And in tranquil resting places.

them to their land and privileges. This idea would seem to limit it, at the utmost, to the return from Babylon. ¶ *Be poured.* This is a common and usual mode of indicating that the influences of the Spirit of God would be imparted. Ezek. xxxix. 29; Isa. xlv. 3; Joel ii. 28, 29; Acts ii. 17, 18. ¶ *From on high.* From heaven. Comp. Luke xxiv. 49. ¶ *And the wilderness be a fruitful field.* Until that change shall come when the places that are desolate shall be fertile, and the places which are now fertile and prosperous shall become desolate and barren. This may refer to the time when Jerusalem and Judea, that would have lain so long waste, would be again inhabited and cultivated, and when Babylon, or Nineveh, and their kingdoms that were then so prosperous, would become desolate and ruined. The expression has a proverbial cast, and denotes change and revolution. See Note, ch. xxix. 17.

16. *Then judgment shall dwell.* Shall be there; the nation shall abound in this; or judgment shall make its appropriate dwelling-place there. ¶ *In the wilderness.* In the place that was a wilderness, but that shall now be turned to a fruitful field. ¶ *In the fruitful field.* In the nation that is like a fruitful field; in Judea restored.

17. *And the work of righteousness.*

That which righteousness produces; or the effect of the prevalence of righteousness on the nation. ¶ *Shall be peace.* There shall be no internal agitation, no oppressions, and no conflicts with those abroad. ¶ *Quietness and assurance.* Peace and safety. There shall be confidence in God, and order shall prevail in the nation. This is a beautiful description of the happy effect of the prevalence of piety. And it is as true now as it was in the time of Isaiah. True religion would put an end to strifes and litigations; to riots and mobs; to oppressions and tumults; to alarms and robbery; to battle and murder, and conflict among the nations.

18. *And my people.* His people restored again to their own land, and delivered from the apprehension of foreign enemies. ¶ *In a peaceable habitation.* In cities and towns and dwellings that would not be alarmed and disturbed by internal or external foes. ¶ *And in sure dwellings.* In dwellings that would be secure from invasion and alarm. All this is descriptive of the peaceful times, and the general security, which followed the return from Babylon. There would be a time of general security and of prosperity, and a time when righteousness would prevail. To this period of happiness and prosperity, Isaiah, as well as the other prophets, often refers.



19. When it shall hail, <sup>1</sup> coming down on the forest; and the city shall be <sup>1</sup> low in a low place.

*l* ch. 30. 30.

<sup>1</sup> or, *utterly abased*.

20. Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, <sup>m</sup> that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.

*m* Eccles. 11. 1, 2.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

19. But it shall hail, and the forest shall be brought down,  
And the city shall be utterly prostrate.  
20. Blessed are ye who sow upon all waters,  
Who send forth thither the foot of the ox and the ass.

19. *When it shall hail.* בָּרַד בָּרֶחַק, *bhārādh berēdhēth*, "and it shall hail in coming down." There is a paronomasia in the original here which cannot be expressed in a translation—a figure of speech which, as we have seen, is common in Isaiah. *Hail* is an image of divine vengeance or punishment (see ch. xxviii. 2, 17, xxx. 30); and the reference here is doubtless to the storms of indignation that should come on the enemies of the Jews, particularly the Assyrians. See Note, ch. xxix. 6; comp. ch. xxx. 30. ¶ *Coming down on the forest.* Coming down on the army of the Assyrian, which is here called a forest. The same term *forest* is given to the army of the Assyrians in ch. x. 18, 19, 33, 34. (See Notes on those places.) The sense is, that the divine judgment should come down on that army with as much severity as a storm of hail descends on a forest—stripping the leaves from the trees, destroying its beauty, and laying it waste. ¶ *And the city.* According to Gesenius this is Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire. According to Rosenmüller, Grotius, and some others, it is Babylon. Hensler supposes that it is Jerusalem, and that the sense is, that as a city that is situated in a valley is safe when the storm and tempest sweep over the hills, so should it be to Jerusalem when the storm of wrath should sweep away the army of the Assyrian. But the connexion evidently requires us to understand it of the capital of the enemy; though whether it be Nineveh or Babylon perhaps cannot be determined. ¶ *Shall be low in a low place.* Marg., "utterly abased." Heb., "in humility

shall be humbled." The sense is, shall be completely prostrate. Those who refer this to Jerusalem suppose it means, when God should humble it by bringing the enemy so near, and exciting so much consternation and alarm. Those who refer it to Babylon suppose it relates to its destruction. If referred to Nineveh, it must mean when the pride of the capital of the Assyrian empire should be abased and humbled by the complete overthrow of their army, and the annihilation of their hopes. The connexion seems to require us to adopt this latter interpretation. The whole verse is very obscure; but perhaps the above will express its general sense.

20. *Blessed are ye.* The sense of this verse is, that while the enemies of the Jews would be overthrown, they themselves would be permitted to cultivate their lands in security. Instead of *predicting* this directly, the prophet *implies* that this would occur, by declaring that those who were permitted to do this were happy. ¶ *That sow beside all waters.* Heb., "Upon (עַל) all waters." This *may* mean that they selected places near running streams, as being most fertile; or it may refer, as Lowth supposes, to the manner of sowing grain, and particularly rice, in eastern countries. This is done by casting the seed upon the water. This custom is referred to in Eccl. xi. 1, "Cast thy bread," *i. e.* thy seed, "upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days;" that is, cast thy seed upon the waters when the river overflows the banks, and the seed will sink into the slime and mud, and will spring up when the waters subside, and you will find it again after many

days in a rich and luxuriant harvest. Sir John Chardin thus describes this mode of sowing: "They sow it (the rice) upon the water; and before sowing, while the earth is covered with water, they cause the ground to be trodden by oxen, horses, and asses, who go mid-leg deep; and this is the way they prepare the ground for sowing." Harmer's Obs. i. p. 280. ¶ *That send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.* That is, for the purpose above specified—that of treading the earth while the water is on it, and preparing it for the seed. In this way the ground would need no ploughing, but the seed would fall into the slime, and be sufficiently covered when the waters should subside. The idea in this verse is, that there would be a state of security succeeding the destruction of their enemies; that they would be permitted to pursue the cultivation of the soil unannoyed and undisturbed.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## ANALYSIS.

This chapter comprises a new and distinct prophecy, though manifestly relating to the same general subject as the preceding. It is not certainly known at what time it was uttered, yet we may presume it was in close connexion with that in the previous chapter. In ver. 19 of the previous chapter, the prophet had foretold the complete destruction of the army of Sennacherib; and this chapter is designed still further to set forth the circumstances and the effects of that invasion and destruction. That it refers to the destruction of Sennacherib and his army is apparent from the whole structure of the prophecy. So it is understood by Lowth, Rosenmüller, Grotius, Calvin, &c., though Vitringa supposes that it refers to the destruction of the *Syrians*, instead of the *Assyrians*, and particularly after the time, and for the crimes of Antiochus Epiphanes. All the circumstances, as well as the connexion, however, agree with the invasion by Sennacherib, and indeed agree far better with that than either with the destruction of Babylon,

or the judgments that should come upon the *Syrians*. The *design* of the prophecy is to assure the Jews that their nation and city would be safe notwithstanding the invasion of the Assyrian; and that JEHOVAH would be to them a source of constant protection and consolation (ver. 21). The object of the prophecy, therefore, is, to comfort them in this threatened invasion, and to lead them to look up to God.

The prophecy, or poem, is one of uncommon beauty in its structure, and is peculiarly elegant in its expressions. It abounds, indeed, in transitions; but they are easily seen, and can be distinctly marked. The structure and design of the poem may be seen in the following analysis.

- I. Woe is denounced against the Assyrian, who had invaded Judea without provocation, and who was spreading desolation over a nation that had not injured him, ver. 1. This contains the *general scope and purport* of the chapter.
- II. The Jews are introduced (ver. 2), as offering up supplications to JEHOVAH in view of the threatened invasion, and beseeching him to be merciful to them, and expressing their confidence in him.
- III. God himself is introduced, declaring the overthrow of Sennacherib, vs. 3. 4. This he represents (ver. 3) under the image of the people—that is, the people in the army of Sennacherib, fleeing at the noise of the tumult, perhaps the tumult caused by the desolating tempest that should sweep them away, and at the act of God's lifting up himself to scathe the nations, and in ver. 4, by a direct address to Sennacherib.
- IV. A chorus of Jews is introduced, (vs. 5, 6,) extolling the greatness and the mercy of God, (ver. 5,) and also celebrating the wisdom and piety of Hezekiah, who had put his confidence in God, ver. 6. (*Lowth.*)
- \* V. In vs. 7—9, the despair and

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

1, Woe to thee that spoilest, <sup>a</sup> and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee!

<sup>a</sup> ch. 21. 2. Hab. 2. 8.

when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou <sup>b</sup> shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.

<sup>b</sup> Rev. 13. 10.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

VISION XXVIII.—Ch. xxxiii. *The Assyrian.*

Woe to thee, thou plunderer, and thou wast not plundered; Thou who dealest perfidiously, and thou wast not treated perfidiously! When thou hast ceased to plunder thou shalt be plundered; And when thou hast done acting perfidiously, thou shalt be treated perfidiously.

alarm of the Jews are described on the approach of Sennacherib. This is exhibited in the following manner:

(a.) The messengers which Hezekiah had sent to Sennacherib, with three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold, to propitiate his favor, (2 Kings, xviii. 14 — 16.) return without success, and weeping bitterly, ver. 7.

(b.) The desolation is described that attended the march of Sennacherib—a desolation that extended to the highways, the cities, and to the most beautiful and fertile places, represented by hewing down Lebanon, and turning Carmel into a wilderness, vs. 8, 9.

VI. God is now introduced (vs. 10—13), as saying that he would take the work of the destruction of the Assyrian into his own hand, and showing that he would be himself exalted (ver. 10); that he would disappoint their expectations (ver. 11); that they should be totally destroyed as if by fire (ver. 12); and calling on the nations near and remote to hear what he had done, ver. 13.

VII. The various effects of the invasion on the inhabitants of Jerusalem are described, vs. 14—19.

(a.) The effect on the hypocrites, producing consternation and alarm of the highest degree, ver. 14.

(b.) This is finely contrasted with the confidence and security of the righteous in that time. They would confide in God (vs. 15, 16); they would see the king in his beauty (ver. 17); and they would see their foe completely destroyed, vs. 18, 19.

VIII. The whole account is closed with a statement of the fact that Jerusalem was safe, and that the enemy should be completely destroyed, vs. 20—24.

1. *Woe to thee that spoilest.* That dost plunder. This description accords entirely with Sennacherib and his army, who had plundered the cities and countries which they had invaded, and who were about to advance to Jerusalem for the same purpose. Comp. ch. xxix. 7, 8; xxxvii. 11. ¶ *And thou wast not spoiled.* That is, thou hadst not been plundered by the Jews against whom thou art coming. It was because the war was so unprovoked and unjust, that God would bring so signal vengeance

2. O LORD, be gracious unto our salvation also in the time of us; we have waited for thee: be trouble.  
thou their arm every morning,

## NEW TRANSLATION.

2. O JEHOVAH be gracious unto us;  
In thee we trust.—  
Be thou their strength every morning,  
Our salvation in the time of trouble.

on them. ¶ *And dealest treacherously.* See Note, ch. xxi. 2. The treachery of the Assyrians consisted in the fact that when their assistance was asked by the Jews, in order to aid them against the combined forces of Syria and Samaria (see ch. vii. 1, 2), in the time of Abaz, they had taken occasion from that invitation to bring desolation on Judah, according as Isaiah predicted it would be. See ch. vii. 17, 20. Notes, ch. viii. 6—8; x. 6. Hezekiah also gave to Sennacherib thirty talents of gold, and three hundred talents of silver, evidently with an *understanding* that this was all that the Assyrian demanded, and that if this was paid he would leave the nation in peace. But this implied promise he perfidiously disregarded. See 2 Kings xviii. 14, 15. ¶ *When thou shalt cease to spoil.* This does not refer to his having *voluntarily* ceased to plunder, but to the fact that God would put an end to it. ¶ *Thou shalt be spoiled.* This was literally fulfilled. The Assyrian monarchy lost its splendor and power, and was finally subdued and merged in the more mighty empire of Babylon. The nation was, of course, subject to the depredation of the conquerors, and compelled to submit to them. ¶ *When thou shalt make an end, &c.* The idea is, that there would be a *completion*, or a finishing of his acts of treachery towards the Jews, and that would be when God should overthrow him and his army. ¶ *They shall deal treacherously, &c.* The words “they shall,” are here equivalent to, “Thou shalt be dealt with in a treacherous manner.” The result was, that Sennacherib was treacherously slain by his own sons, as he was “worshipping in the house of Nisroch his

god,” (Isa. xxxvii. 38;) and thus the prophecy was literally fulfilled. The sense of the whole is, that God would reward their desire of plundering a nation that had not injured them, by the desolation of their own land; and would recompense the perfidiousness of the kings of Assyria that had sought to subject Jerusalem to their power, by perfidiousness in the royal family itself.

2. O LORD. This is a solemn prayer to JEHOVAH, made by the Jews in the apprehension of the invasion of the Assyrian. It is not meant that this prayer was actually offered, but it is a representation of the prophet indicating the alarm of the Jews at his approach, and their disposition to throw themselves upon the mercy of God. ¶ *We have waited for thee.* That is, we have looked for deliverance from this threatened invasion, from thy hand. Comp. Note, ch. xxvi. 8. ¶ *Be thou their arm.* The arm is a symbol of *strength*. It is used in the Scriptures as emblematic of the divine protection, or of the interposition of God in time of calamity and danger. Ex. xv. 16; Job xl. 9; Ps. xlv. 3; lxxvii. 15; lxxxix. 21; xcvi. 1. Lowth proposes to read “our arm” instead of “their arm;” and the connexion would seem to demand such a reading. The Vulgate and the Chaldee read it in this manner; but there is no authority from MSS. for a change in the text. The truth seems to be, that Isaiah, impelled by prophetic inspiration, and full of his subject, here interposes *his own* feelings as a Jew, and offers *his own* prayer that God would be the strength of the nation. The form, however, is *immediately* changed, and he presents the prayer of the people.

3. At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered.

4. And your spoil shall be gathered

like the gathering of the caterpillar: as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

3. At the voice of the tumult the people flee;  
At the lifting up of thyself the nations are scattered.  
4. And your spoil shall be gathered as the locust gathereth;  
As the running to and fro of the locust so shall they run upon it.

¶ *Every morning.* Constantly; at all times. ¶ *In the time of trouble.* Referring particularly to the trouble consequent on the invasion of the Assyrians.

3. *At the noise of the tumult.* Lowth supposes that this is addressed by the prophet in the name of God, or rather by God himself, to the Assyrian, and that it refers to the power which Sennacherib had over the nations to spread consternation; or that the people of the nations were scattered at the noise of the tumult which the invading army of the Assyrians made, and at Sennacherib's raising himself up to spread consternation. But probably it should be regarded as a part of the address which the Jews made to JEHOVAH (ver. 2), and the word "tumult" (רָעָם) *sound, noise*, as of rain, 1 Kings, xviii. 41—or of music, Ezek. xxvi. 13; Amos v. 23—or the bustle or tumult of a people, 1 Sam. iv. 14; xiv. 19; Job xxxix. 7) refers here to the voice of God, by which the army was overthrown. JEHOVAH is often represented as speaking to men in a voice fitted to produce consternation and alarm. Thus of the vision which Daniel saw of a man by the side of the river Hiddekel it is said, "his words" were "like the voice of a multitude" (רָעָם), Dan. x. 6. And thus, in Rev. i. 10, the voice of Christ is said to have been "like the voice of a trumpet;" and in ver. 15, "like the sound of many waters." It will be recollected, also, that it was said that God would send upon the Assyrian army "thunder, and an earthquake, and a great noise, with storm and tempest, and a flame of

devouring fire" (Isa. xxix. 6; comp. ch. xxx. 30); and it is, doubtless, to this prediction that the prophet refers here. God would come forth with the voice of indignation, and would scatter the combined armies of the Assyrian. ¶ *The people fled.* The people in the army of the Assyrian. A large part of them were slain by the angel of the Lord in a single night; but a part of them with Sennacherib escaped and fled to their own land. Isa. xxxvii. 36, 37. ¶ *At the lifting up of thyself.* Of JEHOVAH; as when one rouses himself to strike. ¶ *The nations.* The nations that composed the army of Sennacherib. His army was doubtless made up of levies from the nations that had been subdued, and that composed the Assyrian empire.

4. *And your spoil.* The booty that the Assyrian army had gathered in their march towards Jerusalem, and which would now be left by them to be collected by the Jews. ¶ *Shall be gathered.* Shall be collected by the Jews, as it lies scattered and forsaken in the camp, and in the way of the fleeing army. ¶ *Like the gathering of the caterpillar.* The grammatical construction here is such that this may admit of two interpretations. It may either mean, as the caterpillar or the locust is gathered; or it may mean, as the caterpillar gathers its spoil. It often occurred that in countries where the locust was an article of food, they were scraped together in large quantities, and thrown into ditches, or into reservoirs, and retained to be eaten. This is the custom in some parts of Africa. But the mean-

5. The LORD is exalted; <sup>c</sup> for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment <sup>d</sup> and righteousness.

<sup>c</sup> Ps. 97. 9.

<sup>d</sup> Rom. 3. 26.

6. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: <sup>1</sup> the fear <sup>e</sup> of the LORD is his treasure.

<sup>1</sup> *salvations.*

<sup>e</sup> Pr. 14. 27.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

5. JEHOVAH is exalted; yea, he dwelleth on high;  
He hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.
6. And the stability of thy times, the strength of salvation, shall be wisdom and knowledge;  
The fear of JEHOVAH, this shall be his treasure.

ing here is, undoubtedly, that the plunder of the Assyrian army would be collected by the Jews, as the caterpillar or the locust gathered its food. The sense is, that as locusts spread themselves out over a land; as they go to and fro, without rule and without molestation, gathering whatever is in their way, and consuming everything; so the Jews, in great numbers, and without regular military array, would run to and fro, and collect the spoils of the Assyrian army. In a country where such devastation was made by the caterpillar and locust as in Palestine, this was a very striking figure. The word rendered "caterpillar" here (לָחָל, from לָחַל, to cut off, consume) properly denotes the devourer, and is applied usually to a species of locust. So it is understood here by most of the versions. The LXX render it, "as if one were gathering locusts, so will they insult you."

¶ *As the running to and fro*, &c. As locusts run to and fro, without order or rule, crossing each other in every direction, and collecting everything, so would it be with the Jews in collecting the spoils that the Assyrian army would leave.

5. *The LORD is exalted.* Comp. Ps. xcvi. 9. The prophet here introduces a chorus of the Jews, celebrating the praises of God for delivering them from the Assyrian. ¶ *He dwelleth on high.* In heaven. But he had now manifested himself in the complete overthrow of their enemies. ¶ *He hath filled Zion*, &c. That is, the effect of his destroying his

enemies, will be to fill Jerusalem with reverence for his name. This was often foretold in regard to the effect of the destruction of the Assyrian. The deliverance would be so signal, and the manifestation of the divine mercy so great, that the effect would be, that the nation would turn to God, and acknowledge his gracious interposition. See ch. xxx. 22—26, 29; xxxi. 6; xxxii. 15—18.

6. *And wisdom and knowledge shall be*, &c. This verse contains, evidently, an address to Hezekiah, and asserts that his reign would be characterized by the prevalence of piety and knowledge. This chapter abounds in sudden transitions; and it accords with its general character, that when JEHOVAH had been addressed (ver. 5), there should then be a direct address to Hezekiah. ¶ *The stability.* This word denotes

that in his times, knowledge and the fear of the Lord would be settled on a firm foundation. The whole history of the virtuous reign of Hezekiah shows that this was fulfilled. See 2 Kings, xviii. ¶ *And strength of salvation.* Or saving strength; that is, mighty or distinguished salvation. Thy times shall be distinguished for great reforms, and for the prevalence of the doctrines of salvation. ¶ *The fear of the LORD is his treasure.* The main riches of Hezekiah and of his reign. It shall not be distinguished for wars and conquests, for commercial enterprise, or for external splendor, but for the prevalence of piety, and the fear of the Lord.

7. Behold, their <sup>1</sup> valiant ones of peace shall weep bitterly.  
shall cry without; the ambassadors

<sup>1</sup> or, *messengers*.

8. The highways lie waste, the  
wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

7. Behold, the mighty men cry without;  
The ambassadors of peace weep bitterly.  
8. The highways are desolate;  
The traveller ceaseth:—

7. *Behold.* This verse introduces a new subject, by a sudden transition from the subject in the previous verses. It is designed, with the two following, to exhibit the desolation of the land on the invasion of Sennacherib, and the consternation that would prevail. For this purpose, the prophet introduces (ver. 7) the ambassadors who had been sent to sue for peace, as having sought it in vain, and as weeping now bitterly; he represents (in ver. 8) the desolation that abounded, and the fact that Sennacherib refused to come to any terms; and (in ver. 9) the extended desolations that had come upon the fairest portions of the land. ¶ *Their valiant ones.* The “valiant ones” of the Jews who had been sent to Sennacherib to obtain conditions of peace, or to enter into a negotiation with him to spare the city and the nation. The word which is here rendered “valiant ones” עֲבֵרֵי, *‘ēvērîm*, has given great perplexity to expositors. It occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures. The LXX render the verse, “with the dread of you shall they be terrified; they, of whom you have been afraid, will, for fear of you, raise a grievous cry.” Jerome, in the Vulgate, renders it, “Behold, they seeing, cry without,” &c., as if the word was derived from נָחַץ, *to see*. The Chaldee renders it, “And when it shall be revealed to them, the messengers of the people who went to announce peace, shall cry bitterly.” The Syriac, “If he shall permit himself to be seen by them, they shall weep bitterly,” &c. Symmachus and Theodotion render it, *ὁὐδὲ δὲθῆσομαι αὐτοῖς—Lo, I will appear to them.* So Aquila, *δραθήσομαι αὐτοῖς*. Most or all the versions seem to have rendered

it as if it were compounded of אֵל עֲבֵרֵי, *I will appear to them*. But probably the word is formed from עָבַר, the same as עָבַר Ariel, a hero (see Note, ch. xxix. 1), and means their hero in a collective sense, or their heroes; that is, their men who were distinguished as military leaders, and who were sent to propose terms of peace with Sennacherib. The most honorable and valiant men would be selected, of course, for this purpose, (comp. Note, ch. xxx. 4,) but now they had made the effort to obtain peace in vain, and were returning with consternation and alarm. ¶ *Shall cry without.* Publicly, openly, so that their voice would be heard in the streets. They would lift up their voice with weeping as they returned; and publicly proclaim, with bitter lamentation, that their efforts to obtain peace had failed. ¶ *The ambassadors of peace.* Who should be sent to obtain peace. When Sennacherib had invaded the land, and had advanced as far as to Lachish, Hezekiah sent messengers to him with a rich present, having stripped even the temple of its gold, and sent him all the silver which was in his treasury, evidently for the purpose of propitiating his favor, and of inducing him to return to his own land, and to spare Jerusalem. 2 Kings xviii. 14—16. But it was all in vain. Sennacherib sent his generals with a great host against Jerusalem, and was unmoved by all the treasures which Hezekiah had sent to him, and by his solicitations for peace. 2 Kings xviii. 17. It was to the *future* of this embassy that Isaiah refers in the passage before us.

8. *The highways lie waste.* This verse

broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man.

9. The earth mourneth *and*

languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed *and*<sup>1</sup> hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off *their fruits*.

<sup>1</sup> or, *withered away*.

#### NEW TRANSLATION

He hath broken the covenant;

He despiseth the cities;

He regardeth no man.

9. The land mourneth; it languisheth;

Lebanon is put to shame; it is hewn down;

Sharon is like a desert;

And Bashan and Carmel shake off [their leaves].

contains a description of the desolations that had been caused by the invasion of Sennacherib. Some have understood it as containing the description which the ambassadors sent by Hezekiah gave of the effects of the invasion. Thus Grotius interprets it. But it is probably a description made by the prophet himself, and is designed to state *one cause* why the messengers that had been sent out wept bitterly. They had not only failed of inducing Sennacherib to abandon his purpose of invading Judea and attacking Jerusalem, but they had witnessed the effects of his invasion already. The public ways were desolate. In the consternation and alarm that was produced by his approach, the roads that had been usually thronged were now solitary and still. A mournful desolation already prevailed, and they apprehended still greater calamities, and hence they wept. ¶ *The way-faring man ceaseth*. Heb., He that passes along the road ceases. That is, there is a cessation of travel. No one is seen passing along the streets that used to be thronged. ¶ *He hath broken the covenant*. This may either mean that the Assyrian king had violated the compact which had been made with him by Ahaz, by which he was to come and aid Jerusalem against the allied armies of Syria and Samaria, (see Notes on ch. vii.,) or it may mean that he had violated an implied compact with Hezekiah. When Judea was threatened with an invasion by Senna-

cherib, Hezekiah had sent to him when he was at Iachish, and had sought for peace. 2 Kings xviii. 14. In that embassy Hezekiah said, "I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me I will bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah, three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold." To pay this, Hezekiah exhausted his treasury, and even stripped the temple of its golden ornaments. 2 Kings xviii. 15, 16. A compact was thus made, by which it was understood that Sennacherib was to withdraw his army, and depart from the land. But notwithstanding this, he still persisted in his purpose, and immediately despatched a part of his army to lay siege to Jerusalem. *All the treaties, therefore, had been violated*. He had disregarded that which was made with Ahaz, and that which he had now himself made with Hezekiah, and was advancing, in violation of all, to lay siege to the city. ¶ *He hath despised the cities*. That is, he disregards their defences and their strength; he invades and takes all that comes in his way. He speaks of them with contempt and scorn, as being unable to stand before him, or to resist his march. See his vain and confident boasting in ch. x. 9, and xxxvi. 19. ¶ *He regardeth no man*. He spares no one, and he observes no compact with any man.

9. *The earth mourneth, &c.* The land through which he has passed. For the



10. Now will I rise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself. 11. Ye shall conceive chaff; ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you.

ſ Ps. 46. 10.

NEW TRANSLATION.

10. Now will I arise, saith JEHOVAH;  
Now will I be exalted;  
Now will I lift up myself.  
11. Ye shall conceive chaff;  
Ye shall bring forth stubble:  
Your own spirit is the fire that shall consume you.

sense of this phrase, see Note, ch. xxiv. 4. ¶ *Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down.* For the situation of Lebanon, see Note, ch. x. 34. The phrase, "Lebanon is ashamed," is evidently figurative. Lebanon was distinguished for its ornaments of beautiful cedars. Here it is represented as being stripped of these ornaments, and as covered with shame on that account. There is not any direct historical evidence that Sennacherib had advanced to Lebanon, though there are some intimations in Isaiah that this had occurred (see Note, ch. xiv. 8), and it was certainly a part of the boast of Sennacherib that he had done it. See ch. xxxvii. 24. There is certainly no improbability in supposing that he had sent a part of his army to ravage the cities and country in the vicinity of Lebanon. See ch. xx. 1. ¶ *Sharon is like a wilderness.* Sharon was the name of a district south of Mount Carmel, along the coast of the Mediterranean, extending to Cesarea and Joppa. The name was almost proverbial to express any place of extraordinary beauty and fertility. See Isa. xxxv. 2; lxxv. 10; 1 Chron. v. 16; xxvii. 29; Cant. ii. 1. There was also another Sharon on the east side of the Jordan, and in the vicinity of Bashan, which was also a fertile region. 1 Chron. v. 16. To this, it is more probable that the prophet here refers, though it is not certain. The *object* seems to be to mention the most fertile places in the land as being now desolate. ¶ *Bashan.* For an account of the situation of Bashan, subsequently called Batanea,

see Note, ch. ii. 13. ¶ *And Carmel.* See Note on ch. xxix. 17. ¶ *Shake off their fruits.* The words, "their fruits," are not in the Hebrew. The LXX read this, "Galilee and Carmel are made bare," or naked, *φανερὰ ἔσται κ. τ. λ.* The Hebrew word, *נָחַץ*, probably means to shake; to shake out, or off; and refers here to the fact, probably, that Bashan and Carmel are represented as having shaken off *their leaves*, their principal ornaments, and were now lying desolate as in winter.

10. *Now.* This verse commences another transition. In the previous verses the desolation of the land had been described, and the hopelessness of obtaining any terms of favor from Sennacherib, or of binding him to any compact. In this state of desolation, when inevitable ruin seemed to be coming upon the nation, God said that he would interpose. ¶ *Will I rise, &c.* To vengeance; or to punish the invading host. The emphasis in this passage should be placed on "I," indicating that JEHOVAH would himself do what could not be effected by men. ¶ *Now will I be exalted, &c.* That is, God would so interpose that it should be manifest that it was *his* hand that brought deliverance.

11. *Ye shall conceive chaff.* An address of God to the Assyrians. The figure is one that denotes that their counsels should be vain. Chaff and stubble are used in the Scriptures, in contrast with grain, to denote anything which is not solid, nutritious, or substantial; then anything which is fri-

12. And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.

13. Hear, ye *that are far off*, what I have done; and ye *that are near*, acknowledge my might.

14. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

g Matt. 22. 12.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

12. And the people shall be as lime that is burned;  
Like thorns cut up and consumed in the fire.

13. Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done;  
And know ye that are near, my power.

14. The sinners in Zion are struck with dread;  
Terror hath seized the hypocrites [who say],  
"Who among us can dwell in consuming fire?  
"Who among us can dwell in everlasting burnings?"

volons, useless, vain. A similar image occurs in ch. xxvi. 18. See Note on that place. Comp. ch. lix. 4. ¶ *Your breath, as fire, shall devour you.* The word "breath" here (רוּחַ, spirit) is evidently used in the sense of the Greek θυμός, and denotes probably anger, as in ch. xxx. 28. It refers to the haughty and arrogant spirit of Sennacherib; the enraged and excited mind intent on victory and plunder. And the sense is, that his mind, so intent on conquest, so proud, so excited, so angry, would be the means of his own destruction. Lowth proposes to read "my spirit," but for this change there is no authority from MSS. The sense is, that the spirit of Sennacherib was like a raging and consuming fire, and that this would be the cause of his ruin.

12. *And the people.* In the army of Sennacherib. ¶ *As the burnings of lime.* As if placed in a burning lime-kiln, where they must certainly be destroyed. See ch. xxx. 33. Comp. Amos ii. 1. ¶ *As thorns cut up, &c.* As thorns, or small brush-wood, that has been long cut up and perfectly dried, are speedily and easily consumed, so shall it be with the Assyrian army. This is an image, like many that are employed, denoting that the destruction of the army of the Assyrians would be sudden and entire.

13. *Hear, ye that are far off.* This is an address of JEHOVAH, indicating that the destruction of the Assyrian army would be so signal, that it should be known to distant nations, and should constitute an admonition to them. ¶ *Ye that are near, &c.* Ye Jews; or the nations immediately adjacent to Judea. The phrase "far and near," is equivalent to *all*.

14. *The sinners in Zion are afraid.* This verse is evidently designed to describe the consternation and alarm that was produced in Jerusalem on impenitent sinners and hypocrites by a view of the judgment of God on the army of Sennacherib. They would see his wrath on his enemies then; and in view of the terrors of his indignation, as evinced on that army, they would be alarmed, and would ask how it would be possible for them to endure such wrath for ever. If the effect of the wrath of God, even for a night, when it should blaze against that great army, was so terrible and so consuming, how could it be borne for ever? This seems to be the general idea of the passage. A great variety of interpretations have been proposed, which may be seen in Vitringa, Poole, &c. The phrase, *sinners in Zion*, here refers to the wicked and rebellious in Jerusalem. ¶ *Fearfulness hath surprised.* They are filled

15. He <sup>h</sup> that walketh <sup>1</sup> right- | teously, and speaketh <sup>2</sup> uprightly;  
 & Ps. 15. 2.      <sup>1</sup> in righteousness.      <sup>2</sup> uprightness.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

15. He who walketh in righteousness, and speaketh right things,  
 Despising the gain of oppressions,

with consternation and dread. ¶ *The hypocrites.* Those who professed to serve God, and yet who were secretly depending on the aid of Egypt. See ch. xxxi. Comp. Note, ch. ix. 17. The sentiment here is, that those who professedly are the friends of God, but who are secretly and really his enemies, are often alarmed at his judgments. When the judgments of God overtake sinners, they are secretly conscious that they deserve also his wrath, and their minds are filled with consternation. So in a time of prevailing sickness, or in a time of pestilence, they who have really no confidence in God, and no evidence that they are prepared to die, are filled with alarm. A true friend of God will be calm in such scenes; a hypocrite will show by his consternation that he has no religion. ¶ *Who among us.* The expression means, "who of our number; who can abide to dwell in eternal fire?" implying that they felt that they were exposed to it, and that this heavy judgment and wrath was impending over them. ¶ *Shall dwell with the devouring fire?* Some have understood this as referring to the fires which they supposed the Assyrian would kindle in Jerusalem, apprehending that he would take and burn the city. But the more probable interpretation is that which refers it to the judgment that would be brought upon the Assyrians—the burning wrath of God like fire that would consume them. The destruction of the Assyrians is repeatedly represented under the image of a storm and tempest, where there would be the "flame of devouring fire." See Note, ch. xxix. 6. The sense is this—"God has suddenly consumed that immense army of his foes by the tokens of his wrath. Such must be the awful punishment of the wicked. How can we abide it? We also, though among his

people, are his foes, and are exposed to his wrath. How can we endure the terrors of that day when his burning wrath shall also overtake us?" ¶ *Shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* Who among us could endure to suffer amid such burning wrath for ever? If that wrath is so fierce and terrible as to consume such an immense host in a single night, who could abide it should it be continued from age to age, for ever and for ever? This is the rational and obvious sense of this passage; and it implies—(1.) That hypocrites will be greatly alarmed when they see punishment come upon the open and avowed enemies of God. (2.) That in such times they will have none of the peace and quiet confidence which his true friends have. (3.) That such an alarm is evidence of conscious guilt and hypocrisy. (4.) That the persons here spoken of had a belief of the doctrine of eternal punishment—a belief which hypocrites and sinners always have, else why should they be alarmed? (5.) That the punishment of those who are sinners among the people of God, and of hypocrites in the church, will be dreadful and terrific. This seems to have been the conviction here. They saw that if such judgments came upon those who had had no knowledge of the true God, it must be infinitely more terrible on those who had been trained amidst the institutions of religion, and who had professed attachment to the true God. And so it will be in a pre-eminent degree among those who have been trained in the Christian church, and who have been the professed but insincere followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

15. *He that walketh righteously.* In this and the following verses the prophet presents, in contrast, the confidence and the security of the righteous. He first, in this verse, describes the

he that despiseth the gain of <sup>1</sup> oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of <sup>2</sup> blood, and shutteth his <sup>1</sup> eyes from seeing evil;

<sup>1</sup> or, deceits.

<sup>2</sup> bloods.

¶ Ps. 119. 37.

<sup>3</sup> heights, or, high places.

NEW TRANSLATION.

Shaking his hands from holding a bribe,  
Closing his ears from hearing of blood,  
And closing his eyes from seeing evil,

16. He shall dwell on high;

The strong-holds of the rocks shall be his high defence,  
His bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure.

characteristics of the righteous, and in the following verses their confidence in God, and their security and safety. The first characteristic of the righteous man is, that he walks righteously; that is, he *lives* righteously; he does right. ¶ *And speaketh uprightly.* The second characteristic—his words are well-ordered, and true. He is not false, perfidious, slanderous, or obscene in his words. If a private individual, his words are simple, honest, and true; if a magistrate, his decisions are according to justice. ¶ *He that despiseth the gain of oppressions.* Marg., *deceits.* The third characteristic—he abhors the gain that is the result of imposition, of false dealing, and false weights. He does not improperly commend what he has, or conceal its defects, or undervalue that which others possess. Or if it mean *oppressions*, as the word usually does, then it means, that he does not oppress the poor, or take advantage of their needy condition, or affix exorbitant prices, or extort payment in a manner that is harsh and cruel. ¶ *That shaketh his hands, &c.* The fourth characteristic. This relates particularly to magistrates. They adjudge causes according to justice, and do not allow their judgment to be swayed by the prospect of reward. ¶ *That stoppeth his ears, &c.* This is the fifth characteristic. It means, evidently, he who does not listen to a proposal to shed blood; or to any scheme of vio-

lence, and robbery, and murder. The Hebrew word rendered “blood,” is in the plural, “bloods;” and evidently means bloodshed, or murder. ¶ *And shutteth his eyes from seeing evil.* He does not *desire* to see it; he is not found in the places where it is committed; and he does not participate in the plans of evil. A righteous man should not only have no part in evil, but he will keep himself if possible from being a witness of it. A man who sees all the evil that is going forward, that is present in every brawl and contention, is usually a man who has a fondness for such scenes, and who may be expected to take part in them. It is a remarkable fact that very few of the society of friends are ever seen in courts of justice as *witnesses*. The reason is, that they have no fondness for seeing the strifes and contentions of men; and are not found in those places where evil is usually committed. This is the sixth characteristic of the righteous man; and the sum of the whole is, that he keeps himself from all forms of iniquity.

16. *He shall dwell on high.* See the margin. Heights, or high places, were usually deemed places of safety, as being inaccessible to an enemy. Thus a high tower, a lofty rock, and a cliff, are represented as places of safety, because they were inaccessible to an enemy. The sense here is, that such a man as is described in ver. 15 should be preserved from alarm and danger, *as if his*

17. Thine eyes shall see <sup>k</sup> the King in his beauty: they shall behold the land that <sup>l</sup> is very far

<sup>k</sup> John 17. 24.

<sup>l</sup> of far distances.

18. Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? where is the <sup>2</sup> receiver? where is he that counted the towers?

<sup>2</sup> weigher.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

17. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty;

They shall behold the extreme borders of the land.

18. Thine heart shall meditate on the [past] terror—[saying]

“Where is now the scribe?

“Where is the weigher?

“Where is he that counted the towers?”

habitation were on a lofty cliff or rock. The particular and special meaning is, that he should be safe from the anger, and wrath, and consuming fire, which the sinner and the hypocrite dreaded. Ver. 14. ¶ *His place of defence, &c.* He shall be as secure as if his dwelling were on the lofty rocks. ¶ *The munitions of rocks.* The literal translation of this place would be, “The strong-holds of the rocks shall be his lofty fortress.” Comp. Note, ch. ii. 21. ¶ *Bread shall be given him, &c.* He shall be sustained, and his life shall be preserved.

17. *Thine eyes.* The eyes of the righteous, described in ver. 15. ¶ *Shall see the King in his beauty.* Some understand this of the Assyrian king. Thus Kimchi understands it, and supposes it means that they shall see him at the walls of Jerusalem; that is, shall see him destroyed. But this, manifestly, cannot be the meaning. Vitringa supposes it means JEHOVAH himself, as the king of his people, and that they should see him in his glory. Others suppose it refers to the Messiah. But the immediate connexion requires us to understand it of Hezekiah. Comp. Note, ch. xxxii. 1, 2. The sense is, “You shall be safe. You shall be defended from the hostile army of the Assyrian. You shall be permitted to live under the peaceful and prosperous reign of your pious monarch; you shall see him, not with diminished territory and resources, but with the appropriate beauty and magnificence which becomes a monarch of Israel.” ¶ *The land that is very far*

*off.* You shall be permitted to look to the remotest part of the land of Judea as delivered from enemies, and as still under the happy sceptre of your king. You shall not be confined by a siege, and straitened within the narrow walls of Jerusalem. The empire of Hezekiah shall be extended over the wide dominions that appropriately belong to him, and the nation shall be at peace; and you shall be permitted to range freely over the whole land, and even over the parts that are now occupied by the forces of the Assyrian. Virgil has a beautiful passage remarkably similar to this:

— “juvat ire, et Dorica castra,  
Desertosque videre locos, litusque relictum.”  
ÆN. ii. 28.

18. *Thine heart.* The heart of the people of Jerusalem that should be preserved. ¶ *Shall meditate terror.* This is similar to the expression in Virgil:

— “forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit.”  
ÆN. i. 203.

The sense is, “You shall hereafter *think* over all this alarm and distress. When the enemy is destroyed, and the city saved, and the king shall reign in magnificence over all the nation then enjoying peace and prosperity, you shall recall these days of terror and alarm; you shall then ask with gratitude and astonishment, “Where are they who caused this alarm? Where are now they who so confidently calculated on taking the city? They are all gone—and gone in a manner fitted to excite

19. Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a <sup>1</sup> stammering tongue, that *thou canst* not understand.
20. Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not

<sup>1</sup> or, ridiculous.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

19. That fierce people thou shalt not see;  
That people of obscure speech which thou couldst not hear,  
Of a barbarous tongue which thou couldst not understand.
20. Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities.  
Thine eyes shall behold Jerusalem a quiet habitation,  
A tent that shall not be moved;  
Whose stakes shall not be plucked up for ever,  
And whose cords shall not be broken.

astonishment and adoring gratitude." "Sweet is the recollection," says Rosenmüller, "of dangers that are passed." ¶ *Where is the scribe?* How soon, how suddenly has he vanished! The word *scribe* here (שֹׁבֵר) evidently refers to some prominent class of officers in the Assyrian army. It is from שָׁבַר, to count, to number, to write; and probably refers to a secretary, perhaps a secretary of state or of war, or an inspector general, who had the charge of reviewing an army. Jer. xxxvii. 15; lii. 25; 2 Kings xxv. 19. ¶ *Where is the receiver?* Margin, as in the Hebrew, *weigher*. The Vulgate renders this, "Where is he that ponders the words of the law?" The LXX, "Where are the counsellors, (συμβουλευόντες)?" Probably the word refers to him who weighed the tribute, or the pay of the soldiers; and refers, doubtless, to some officer in the army of the Assyrian; probably, I think, to him whose office it was to have charge of the military chest, and to pay the army. ¶ *Where is he that counted the towers?* That is, who made an estimate of the strength of Jerusalem—either Sennacherib, or some one appointed by him to reconnoitre and report on the means which the city had of defence. Comp. ch. xxxvi. 4.

19. *Thou.* The Jews, the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¶ *Shalt not see a fierce people.* Or rather, "this fierce and

boasting people you shall not see." They shall not enter the city; but though they are advancing with so much confidence, they shall be suddenly cut off and destroyed. The word rendered "fierce," נָקִי, from נָקָה, probably means *strong*, or *wicked*. Lowth renders it, "barbarous people," as if it were נָקִי. Michaelis also adopts this reading, by supposing an error in transcribing, a change of נ into כ. Such a change might have easily occurred, but there is no authority from the MSS. for making an alteration in the text. The word *strong*, or *mighty*, agrees well with the connexion. ¶ *A people of a deeper speech.* A people speaking a language unintelligible to you; whose language is so deep, i. e., so dark, or obscure, that it cannot be understood by you. This refers to the army of the Assyrians, who spoke the Syrian language, which was understood by some of the Jews, but which was unintelligible to the mass. See ch. xxxvi. 11. ¶ *Than thou canst perceive.* Than you can understand. ¶ *Of a stammering tongue.* See Note, ch. xxviii. 11. The margin is, "ridiculous"—a sense which the Hebrew will bear; but the more appropriate meaning is that of a barbarous or unintelligible foreign language.

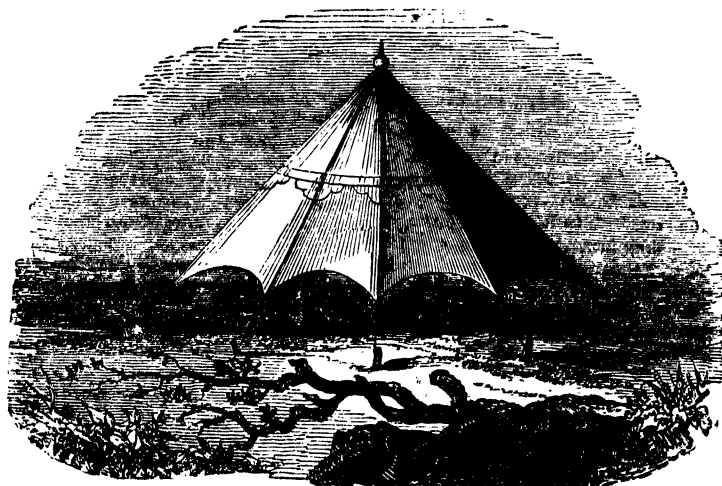
20. *Look upon Zion.* Lowth renders this, "Thou shalt see Zion," by changing the Hebrew text in conformity with the Chaldee. There is no doubt that

be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever<sup>1</sup> be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 3. 12.

this accords with the sense of the passage, but there is no authority for the change in the text. It stands in contrast with what had been said in ver. 19. There, the prophet had said that they should no more see those foreign armies that were coming to invade them. Here, he directs them to look upon Zion, implying that they should be permitted to behold Zion in a situation such as he proceeds to describe it. "You shall not see that foreign army carrying desolation, as they design, through the city and the land. They shall be destroyed. But behold Zion. Her you shall see, quiet, prosperous, happy, peaceful." ¶ *The city of our solemnities.* Where the religious solemnities of the nation were celebrated. ¶ *A quiet habitation.* Free from invasion and from the terrors

of war. ¶ *A tabernacle.* A tent, a dwelling such as was common in the nomadic mode of life in the East. The whole city is described under the image of a tent that is fixed and undisturbed; where the family may reside in safety and comfort. ¶ *That shall not be taken down.* The sense is, it shall not be struck, in order to removal. ¶ *Not one of the stakes thereof.* Still keeping up the idea of a tent. The stakes here refer to the poles or fixtures which were driven into the ground, in order to fasten the tent to them, to enable them to spread it; or to the small stakes or pins that were driven in the ground, in order to fasten the cords by which the tent was extended. The following engraving will give an idea of the mode in which tents were commonly pitched, and will serve



to explain this passage, as well as the similar passage in ch. liv. 2. ¶ *Shall ever be removed.* It shall be a fixed and permanent habitation. The word "ever" must mean an indefinite period of dura-

tion. Sennacherib had designed to blot out the name of the people of God, and destroy their separate and independent existence. The prophet says that that should never be done. Jerusalem, the

21. But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place <sup>1</sup> of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.

<sup>1</sup> *broad of spaces, or, hands.*

NEW TRANSLATION.

21. But there the glorious JEHOVAH will be unto us  
A place of rivers, and streams that are broad;  
Where no oared galley shall pass,  
Neither shall any mighty ship go through.

residence then of his people and the emblem of his church, would be safe, and would not be destroyed. There would *always* be a safe and quiet abode for the friends of the Most High. In this sense it accords with the declaration of the Saviour, that the gates of hell should not prevail against his church. ¶ *Neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.* Cords were used in tents to fasten the cloth to the poles; or to fasten it to the pins which had been driven into the ground, in order to extend the cloth and to make it firm.

21. *But there.* In Jerusalem; or in his church, of which Jerusalem was the emblem. ¶ *The glorious LORD.* The glorious JEHOVAH. Lowth renders it, "the glorious name of JEHOVAH," taking עֲדָי, as if it were pointed עֲדָי, to be a noun. So the Syriac and the LXX read it. The word *glorious*, נִרְאָה, means magnificent; meaning that JEHOVAH would manifest himself there as magnificent or great in the destruction of his enemies and in the protection of his people. ¶ *Will be unto us.* Unto his people. ¶ *A place.* It seems to be harsh to say that JEHOVAH would be a place; but the meaning is, that he would be to them *as* such a place; or his presence with them would be like broad rivers and streams; that is, his presence and blessing would be such as would be represented by broad rivers and streams flowing through a land, or encompassing a city. Rivers and streams in a land, or flowing to and around a city, are sources of fertility, the channels of commerce, and objects of great beauty. Such seems to be the idea here. The presence of JEHOVAH would be to them

a source of great prosperity and happiness; there would be an increase to the nation of all that could really add to its welfare; and a beauty would be thrown around the city and nation like majestic and useful rivers. It is possible that there may have been some allusion here to some cities that were encompassed or penetrated by rivers and canals, like Babylon, or Memphis in Egypt, &c. Such cities derived important advantages from streams and rivers. But Jerusalem had no such commercial advantages; nothing of this nature to contribute to its prosperity or beauty. The prophet says, that the presence of JEHOVAH would be to them what these rivers were to other cities. ¶ *Of broad rivers and streams.* Heb., "rivers, streams of broad spaces, or hands." The sense seems to be, broad rivers, that are made up of confluent streams; or rivers to which many streams are tributary—like the Nile—and which are therefore made *broad*, and capable of navigation. The phrase here used—in the Heb., "broad of hands,"—properly denotes *broad on both hands*, or as we would say, *on both sides*; that is, the shores would be separated far from each other. The word *hand* is often used in Hebrew to denote the *side*, the shore, or the bank of a river. The following extract will show the importance of such rivers: "In such a highly cultivated country as England, and where great drought is almost unknown, we have not an opportunity to observe the fertilizing influence of a broad river; but in South Africa, where almost no human means are employed for improving the land, the benign influence of rivers is most evident. The Great,



22. For the LORD is our judge, they could not well strengthen the LORD is our <sup>1</sup>lawgiver, the their mast, they could not spread the LORD is our king; he will save us. the sail: then is the prey of a great

23. Thy <sup>2</sup>tacklings are loosed; spoil divided; the lame <sup>m</sup> take the prey.

<sup>1</sup>statutemaker.  
*or, they have forsaken the tacklings.*

*m 1 Cor. 1. 27.*

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

22. For JEHOVAH is our judge;  
 JEHOVAH is our lawgiver;  
 JEHOVAH is our king:  
 He will save us.
23. Thy ropes hang loose;  
 They could not make firm the base of the mast;  
 They could not spread the sail:  
 Then shall a great spoil be divided;  
 The lame shall take the prey.

or Orange River, is a remarkable instance of this. I travelled on its banks, at one time, for five or six weeks; when, for several hundred miles, I found both sides of it delightfully covered with trees of various kinds, all in health and vigor, and abundance of the richest verdure; but all the country beyond the reach of its influence was complete desert. Everything appeared to be struggling for mere existence; so that we might be said to have had the wilderness on one side, and a kind of paradise on the other." — *Campbell*. ¶ *Wherein shall go, &c.* The mention of broad rivers here seems to have suggested to the prophet the idea that broad navigable rivers, while they were the channels of commerce, and the source of prosperity, also gave to an enemy the opportunity of approaching easily with vessels of war, and attacking a city. He therefore says that no such consequence would follow, from the fact that JEHOVAH would be to them in the place of broad rivers. No advantage could be taken from what was to them a source of prosperity and happiness. While other cities were exposed to an enemy in the very quarters, and from the very sources from which they derived their wealth and prosperity, it would not be so with them. From what constituted their glory—the protection of JEHOVAH—no danger ever could be

apprehended. It had all the advantage of broad rivers and streams, but with none of their attendant exposures and perils. ¶ *No galley with oars.* That is, no small vessel—for larger vessels were propelled by sails. Still the reference is doubtless to a vessel of war; since vessels of commerce would be an advantage, and would not be to be feared, and it would not be an object of congratulation that none of them should be there. ¶ *Neither shall gallant ship.* No great (גָּדוֹל) or magnificent ship; no ship fitted out for purposes of war. The sense is, therefore, that though Jerusalem should be thus favored, yet it should be safe, and unapproachable by an enemy. ¶ *Pass thereby.* Pass over the broad rivers and streams; there should be no ships of war passing on those streams.

22. For the LORD is our judge, &c. JEHOVAH will be to us nothing but a source of happiness, truth, prosperity. His presence will be to us only a blessing, and a means of prosperity and joy. The repetition of the name JEHOVAH three times is common in the Scriptures.

23. Thy tacklings. This is evidently an address to Sennacherib. The mention of the war-galley and the ship seems to have suggested the application of the figure to the enemies of the Jews, and particularly to Sennacherib. The

24. And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: "the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven ° their iniquity.

° Rev. 21. 4.

o Jer. 50. 20.

NEW TRANSLATION.

24. And the inhabitants shall not say, "I am infirm."

The people that dwell therein is freed from the punishment of their iniquity.

prophet, therefore, compares the Assyrian to a ship that was rendered unmanageable and unserviceable, whose sails were unfastened, and whose mast could not be made firm, and which was, therefore, at the mercy of winds and waves. The Hebrew, which is here rendered "thy tacklings are loosed," means "thy cords are let go;" that is, the cords or ropes that fastened the sails, the masts and the rudder, were loosened. In such a condition the ship would of course go to ruin. ¶ *They could not well strengthen their mast.* They could not fix it firm or secure. It is evident that if the mast cannot be made firm, it is impossible to navigate a ship. It is to be observed here, however, that the word which our translators have rendered "well," *בט*, not only signifies *well*, as an adverb, but is also used as a noun, and means a *stand* or *station*, (Gen. xl. 13; xli. 13; Dan. xi. 20, 21;) and also a *base* or *pedestal*, 1 Kings vii. 31; Ex. xxx. 18, 28; xxxi. 9; xxxv. 16; xxxviii. 8; Lev. viii. 11. It may be used here to denote the *socket*, or *base* of the ship's mast; or the cross-beam through which a hole was made to let the mast into, and to hold it firm. This was called by the Greeks *ιστοπέδον*, (Odyssey, 12, 51,) or *μεισόδμη ιστοδόκη*, (Iliad, i. 434.) The translation, therefore, "They could not make fast the base of their mast," would better express the sense of the Hebrew. The LXX render it, "thy mast gave way." ¶ *They could not spread the sail.* Of course as the ropes were all loosened, and the mast could not be made firm, it would be in vain to attempt to spread a sail. The sense is, that the plan of the Assyrian would be disconcerted, his scheme discomfited, and his enterprise would come to nought. He and his army would be like a vessel

at sea without sails. ¶ *Then is the prey of a great spoil divided.* The word *divided* here means shall be distributed, or apportioned, as spoil or plunder was usually among victors. The sense is, that much plunder or booty would be taken from the army of the Assyrian and distributed among the Jews. See Note on ver. 4. It is certain that Hezekiah had given to Sennacherib three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold, and had stripped the temple, and given the gold that was on the temple to him, (2 Kings xviii. 14—16,) and this treasure was doubtless in the camp of the Assyrians. And it is certain that *after* this invasion of Sennacherib, the treasures of Hezekiah were replenished, and that his wealth abounded; so much so that he made an improper and ostentatious display of it to the ambassadors that came from Babylon, (2 Kings xx. 13—15;) and there is every presumption, therefore, that a great amount of spoil was collected from the camp of the Assyrian. ¶ *The lame take the prey.* The lame among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It shall be so abundant, and shall be so entirely abandoned by the Assyrians, that even the feeble and the defenceless shall go forth to the camp and take the spoil that is left.

24. *And the inhabitant.* The inhabitant of Jerusalem. ¶ *Shall not say, I am sick.* That is, probably, the weak and the infirm of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not plead their infirmity as an excuse for not going forth against the Assyrians. But the spoil shall be so abundant, and the facility for taking it so great, that even the sick, the aged, and the infirm, shall go forth nerved with new vigor to gather the spoil. ¶ *The people that dwell therein.* In Je-

Jerusalem. ¶ Shall be forgiven their in-

This is equivalent to saying that the calamities of the invasion would be entirely removed. This invasion is represented as coming upon them as a judgment for their sins. When the Assyrian should be overthrown, it would be a proof that the sin which had been the cause of the invasion had been forgiven, and that God was now disposed to show them favor and mercy. It is common in the Scriptures to represent any calamity as the consequence of sin, and to identify the removal of the calamity and the forgiveness of the sin. Thus the Saviour said (Mark ii. 5) to the man afflicted with the palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." And when the scribes murmured, the Saviour urged that the power of forgiving sins and of healing disease was the same, or that the forgiveness of sin was equivalent to the removal of disease. Mark ii. 9.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### ANALYSIS.

The thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth chapters make one distinct and beautiful prophecy, consisting of two parts, the first containing a denunciation of judgment on the enemies of the Jews and of **JEHOVAH** — particularly Edom, (ch. xxxiv.); and the second a most beautiful description of the flourishing state of the people of God that should follow these judgments. Ch. xxxv.

At what time this prophecy was delivered it is uncertain, and, indeed, can be determined by nothing in the prophecy itself. It is observable, however, that it is the close of the first part of the prophecies of Isaiah, the remaining chapters, to the fortieth, which commences the second part of the prophecies, being occupied with an historical description of the invasion of Sennacherib and his army. It has been supposed (see the Introduction, § 2, 3) that between the delivery of the prophecies in the first and second portions of Isaiah an interval of some years elapsed, and that the second part was delivered for his own consolation, and the consolation of the people, near the close of his life.

A somewhat similar purpose and feeling, as I apprehend, led to the composition and publication of the prophecy before us. It is the close of the first portion of his prophecies; the last of the series of separate and independent predictions. The *general strain* of his prophecies thus far has been that, however numerous and mighty were the enemies of the Jews, and however formidable their armies and their power, the people of God would be delivered from them all. Such was the case in regard to the allied armies of Syria and Samaria, (ch. vii., viii.;) of the Assyrian, (ch. x.;) of Babylon, (ch. xiii., xiv.;) of Moab, (ch. xv., xvi.;) of Damascus and Ethiopia, (ch. xvii., xviii.;) of Egypt, (ch. xix., xx.;) and more particularly of the Assyrians under Sennacherib, (ch. xxxv., xxxix., xxxi., xxxii., xxxiii.) The prophecy before us I regard as a kind of *summing up*, or recapitulation of all that he had delivered; and the general idea is, *that the people of God would be delivered from all their foes, and that future happy times under the Messiah would succeed all their calamities*. This he had expressed often in the particular prophecies; he here expresses it in a summary and condensed manner.

Keeping this general design of the prophecy in view, we may observe that it consists of the following parts:—

I. A general statement that all the enemies of the people of God would be destroyed, ch. xxxiv. 1—4.

(a.) The nations of the earth are summoned to see this, and to become acquainted with the purpose of God thus to destroy all his enemies, ver. 1.

(b.) The destruction of the enemies of God described under the image of a great slaughter, denoting their entire overthrow, vs. 2, 3.

(c.) The same destruction described under the image of the heavens rolled together as a scroll, and the stars falling, ver. 4.

II. This general truth particularly applied to Edom or Idumea, as

among the most virulent of their enemies, and as a representation of them all, vs. 5—17.

(a.) JEHOVAH'S vengeance should come upon the land of Idumea, and the land should be covered with the slain, and soaked in blood, verses 5—8.

(b.) The entire and utter desolation of the land of Idumea is foretold in language remarkably resembling that used of the destruction of Babylon. The kingdom should be destroyed; the land laid waste; and the whole country should become a dwelling place of wild beasts, vs. 9—17.

III. The future happy times that should succeed—the times of the Messiah—are exhibited (ch. xxxv.) in language of great beauty and sublimity. This is the substance of all that the prophet had predicted, and all his visions terminate there. The wilderness shall blossom; the sick and the afflicted shall be healed; the desolate lands shall be fertile; there shall be no enemy to annoy, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

As so large a part of this prophecy relates to Edom, or Idumea, it may be proper to preface the exposition of the chapter with a brief notice of the history of that country, and of the causes for which God denounced vengeance upon that land. The evidences of the fulfilment of the prophecy will be exhibited in the course of the exposition. See Notes on vs. 9—17.

Idumea was the name given by the Greeks to the land of Edom, the country which was settled by Esau. The country which they occupied extended originally from the Dead Sea, to the Elanitic gulf of the Red Sea. Their territory, however, they extended considerably by conquest, and carried their arms to the east and north-east of Moab, and obtained possession of the country of which Bozrah was the chief city. To

this they had had access through the intervening desert, without crossing the country of the Moabites, or Ammonites. The capital of East Idumea was Bozrah; the capital of South Edom was Petra, or Sela—called in 2 Kings xiv. 7, Joktheel. See Note, ch. xvi. 1.

This country received its name from Esau, the son of Isaac, and the twin brother of Jacob, and the elder of the two. He was called Edom, which signifies *red*, from the color of the red pottage which he obtained from Jacob by the sale of his birthright. Gen. xxv. 30. After his marriage he removed to Mount Seir, and made that his permanent abode, and the country adjacent to it received the name of Edom. Mount Seir had been occupied by a people called Horites, who were displaced by Esau, when he took possession of their country and made it his own. Deut. ii. 12. The Edomites were at first governed by princes, improperly translated "Dukes," Gen. xxxvi. 9—31. They were an independent people until the time of David. They seem to have continued under the government of separate princes, until the apprehension of foreign invasion compelled them to unite under one leader, and to submit themselves to a king. When Moses and the children of Israel were passing through the wilderness, as the land of Edom lay between them and Canaan, Moses sent ambassadors to the king of Edom, soliciting the privilege of a peaceful passage through their country, on the ground that they were descended from the same ancestor, and promising that the property of the Edomites should not be injured by the children of Israel, and offering to pay for all that they should consume. Num. xx. 14—19. To this reasonable request the king of Edom sent a positive refusal, and came out with a strong army to resist them. Num. xx. 20. This refusal was long remembered by the Jews, and was one cause of the hostile feeling which was cherished against them. The kingdom of Edom seems to have risen to a considerable degree of prosperity. There is indeed no direct mention made of it after this until the time of David;

but it seems to have then risen into so much importance as to have attracted his attention. David carried his arms there after having obtained a victory over the Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites. It is not known, indeed, what was the cause of this war, but it is known that David slew eighteen thousand Edomites in the valley of Salt (2 Sam. viii. 13; 1 Chron. xviii. 12), and the rest of them were either brought into subjection under Joab, or forced to fly into foreign countries. Hadad, their young king, fled to Egypt, and was favorably received by Pharaoh, and was highly honored at his court. He was married to the sister of Tahpenes, the sister of the queen of Egypt. 1 Kings xi. 15—20. Yet though he lived at the court of Pharaoh, he waited only for an opportunity to recover his kingdom, and when David and Joab were dead he proposed to the king of Egypt to make an effort to accomplish it. He returned to Idumea, but was unsuccessful in his attempts to overcome the garrisons which David had stationed to guard and secure the country. Joseph. Ant. B. viii. ch. 2. The kingdom of Edom continued under the house of David until the time of Jehoshaphat, and was probably governed by deputies or viceroys appointed by the kings of Judah. In the reign of Jehoshaphat they joined the Moabites and Ammonites in an attempt to surprise Jehoshaphat, and to recover their freedom, but they were unsuccessful. In the reign of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, however, they rose in a body, and though they suffered great slaughter, yet they regained their freedom. 2 Chron. xxi. 8—10. After this, no attempts were made to subdue them for more than sixty years. In the reign of Amaziah, king of Judah, however, they were attacked, and ten thousand of them fell in battle in the valley of Salt, and many were made prisoners; their capital, Selah, was taken by storm, and the two thousand captives were by Amaziah's orders thrown down the ragged precipices near the city, and dashed in pieces. 2 Kings xiv. 7; 2 Chron. xxv. 12. Universal History, vol. i. p. 380, Ed. Lond. 1779,

8vo. When the Jews were subdued by the Babylonians, and carried captive, when their city and temple were destroyed and the land laid waste, they seem to have regarded it as a favorable opportunity to avenge all the injustices which they had suffered from the hands of the Jews. They joined the Babylonians in their attempts to subdue Jerusalem, and exulted in the fall and ruin of the city.

Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom  
In the day of Jerusalem; who said,  
Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.  
Ps. cxxxvii. 7.

They seem to have resolved to take full vengeance for the fact that their nation had been so long subjected by David and his successors; to have cut off such of the Jews as attempted to escape; to have endeavored to level the whole city with the ground; to have rejoiced in the success of the Babylonians, and to have imbrued their hands in the blood of those whom the Chaldeans had left—and were thus held to be guilty of the crime of fratricide by God. See particularly Obad. 10—12, 18; Ezek. xxv. 12—14, xxxv. 3—15. It was for this especially that they were denounced and threatened by the prophets with heavy judgment, and with the utter destruction of the nation. Isa. xxxiv. 5, 10—17; Jer. xlix. 7—10, 12—18; Ezek. xxv. 12—15; xxxv. 1—15; Joel iii. 19; Amos i. 11; Obad. 2, 3, 8, 17, 18; Mal. i. 3, 4. This refusing to aid their brethren the Jews, and joining with the enemies of the people of God, and exulting in their success, was the great crime in their history which was to call down the divine vengeance, and terminate in their complete and utter ruin.

Their exultation did not long continue; and their cruelty to the Jews did not long remain unpunished. Five years after the taking of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar humbled all the states around Judea, and particularly Idumea. Jer. xxv. 15—26; Mal. i. 3, 4. John Hircanus afterwards entirely conquered them, and compelled them to receive circumcision and the law. They continued subject to the later kings of

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

1. Come <sup>a</sup> near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth <sup>b</sup> hear, and <sup>c</sup> all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 49. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Deut. 32. 1.  
<sup>c</sup> the fulness thereof.

2. For <sup>c</sup> the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.

<sup>c</sup> Zeph. 3. 8.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

VISION XXIX.—Ch. xxxiv., xxxv. . *Idumea.*

1. Draw near, ye nations, to hear;  
And ye people hearken!  
Let the earth hear, and all that is therein;  
The world, and all that spring from it.
2. For the wrath of JEHOVAH is upon all nations,  
And his anger upon all their armies:  
He hath devoted them to destruction,  
He hath given them up to slaughter.

Judea until Jerusalem was taken by the Romans. A part of them left their own land and settled in the southern part of Judea, within the boundaries of the tribes of Simeon and Judah. The name Idumea was transferred to this part of the land of Judea which they occupied, and this is the Idumea which is mentioned by Pliny, Ptolemy, Strabo, and other ancient writers. The people who remained in the vicinity of Mount Seir, and who occupied the ancient territory of Idumea, became mingled with the children of Nebaioth, a son of Ishmael, and were called ever afterwards by the name of Nabatheans. Their own kingdom was thus blotted out, and their name was lost. In their own land they ceased to be a separate people, and mingled with the other descendants of Ishmael; in Judea they became, under John Hircanus, converts to the Jewish faith, received the rite of circumcision, and were incorporated with the Jews. Very interesting remains of cities and towns of Idumea, and particularly of Petra, have been recently discovered by the travellers Burckhardt and Seetzen. See Universal History, vol. i. 370—383; Biblical Repository, vol. iii. pp. 247—270; Gesenius's Introduction to his Commen. on this chapter; and the Travels of Burckhardt, Legh, Laborde,

and Stephens; and Keith on the Evidences of Prophecy, pp. 135—168.

1. *Come near, ye nations, to hear.* That is, to hear of the judgments which God was about to execute, and the great purposes which he was about to accomplish. If the supposition be correct that this and the following chapter contain a *summing up* of all that the prophet had thus far uttered; a declaration that ALL the enemies of the people of God should be destroyed—the last of which, and the most violent and bitter of which, was Idumea; and that this was to be succeeded by the happy times of the Messiah, then we see a plain reason why all the nations are summoned to hear and attend. The events pertain to them all; the truths communicated are of universal interest. It is not uncommon for the prophets thus to call on the nations of the earth to hear what they have to communicate. ¶ *And all that is therein.* Heb., as in the margin, “fulness thereof;” that is, all the inhabitants of the earth. ¶ *All things that come forth of it.* All that proceed from it; that is, all the inhabitants that the world has produced. The LXX render it, “the world and the people (ὁ λαός) who are therein.”

2. *For the indignation of the LORD,*

3. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

4. And <sup>d</sup> all the host of heaven  
d Ps. 102. 26. Ezek. 32. 7, 8. Joel 2. 31; 3. 15,  
 16. Matt. 24. 29. 2 Pet. 3. 10. Rev. 6. 13, 14.

shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

3. Their slain shall be cast out,  
 From their carcases the stench shall ascend;—  
 And the mountains shall melt with their blood.
4. And all the host of heaven shall melt away;  
 And the heavens shall be rolled up as a scroll:  
 And all their host shall fall down,  
 As the falling of leaves from the vine,  
 And as the falling of figs from the fig-tree.

&c. JEHOVAH is about to express his wrath against all the nations which are opposed to his people. ¶ *He hath utterly destroyed them.* In his purpose, or intention. The prophet represents this as so certain, that it may be exhibited as already done.

3. *Their slain also shall be cast out.* They would lie unburied. The slaughter would be so extensive, and the desolation would be so entire, that there would not remain enough to bury the dead. Comp. Note, ch. xiv. 19. ¶ *And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.* The expression here is evidently hyperbolic, and means that there should be a vast quantity of blood poured out; that as mountains and hills are wasted away by descending showers and impetuous torrents, so the hills should be washed away by the vast quantity of blood that should be shed by the anger of JEHOVAH.

4. *And all the host of heaven.* On the word *host* (צְבָאָה), see Note, ch. i. 9. The heavenly bodies often represent kings and princes. Comp. Note on ch. xxiv. 21. ¶ *Shall be dissolved.* (יִדָּוּ). This figure Vitringa supposes is taken from the vulgar prejudice by which the stars of heaven appear to be crystals, or gems, set in the azure vault of heaven, which may melt and flow down

by the application of heat. The sense is, that there should be great destruction; that the princes and nobles who had opposed God and his people would be destroyed, *as if* the sparkling stars, like gems, should melt in the heavens, and flow down to the earth. ¶ *And the heavens shall be rolled together, as a scroll.* The word *scroll* here (סֵפֶר, *sēphēr*), means a roll, or a book. Books were made of parchment, leaves, &c., and were rolled together, instead of being bound as they are with us. The idea here is evidently figurative. The figure is taken from what strikes the eye, that the heaven above us is an expanse (רָקִיעַ, *rāqīa*, Gen. i. 8; Ps. civ. 2), which is spread out, and which might be rolled together, and thus pass away. It is possible that there may be a reference here also to the fact, that in a storm, when the sky is filled with dark rolling clouds, the heavens seem to be rolled together, and to be passing away. The sense is, that there would be great destruction among those high in office and in power—a destruction that would be well represented by the rolling up of the firmament, and the destruction of the visible heavens and their host, and by leaving the world to ruin and to night. ¶ *And all their host shall fall down.* That is, their stars; either by being, as it were,

5. For my sword shall be bathed the people of my curse, to judgment in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, <sup>e</sup> and upon  
 6. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat

*e* Jer. 49. 7.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

5. For my sword rushes intoxicated from heaven ;  
 Behold, on Edom it shall descend,  
 And upon the people of my curse for vengeance.  
 6. The sword of JEHOVAH is glutted with blood ;  
 It is satiated with fatness ;

*melted*, or by the fact that the *expanse* in which they are apparently located would be rolled up and removed, and there being no *fixtures* for them they would fall. This is a most striking and beautiful figure. The same image here employed occurs in Rev. vi. 13. One somewhat similar occurs in Virgil, Georg. i. 365, seq. The sense is, that there would be vast commotion among the nations that were the objects of the divine displeasure; that they would be consigned to ruin as certain and as awful as if the stars of heaven were to fall, and all the vast expanse in which they are set should be wrapped together and pass away. ¶ *As the leaf falleth off from the vine, &c.* That is, in a storm, or when violently shaken.

5. *For my sword shall be bathed in heaven.* A sword is an instrument of vengeance, and is often so used in the Scriptures, because it was often employed in capital punishments. See Note, ch. xxvii. 1. This passage has given much perplexity to commentators, on account of the apparent want of meaning of the expression, that the sword should be *bathed in heaven*. Lowth reads it—

For my sword is made bare in the heavens; following in this the Chaldee, which reads, *יִשְׁתַּבֵּחַ*, shall be revealed. But there is no authority from MSS. for this change in the Hebrew text. The Vulgate renders it, *Quoniam inebriatus est in cælo gladius meus*; “my sword is intoxicated in heaven.” The LXX render it in the same way, *Ἐμεθύσθη ἡ μάχαρά μου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ*; and the Syriac and Arabic in the same manner.

The Hebrew word *יָסַף*, from *סָפַף*, means properly to drink to the full; to be satisfied, or sated with drink; and then to be full or satiated with intoxicating liquor, to be drunk. It is applied to the sword, as satiated or made drunk with blood, in Jer. xlv. 10:

And the sword shall devour,  
 And it shall be satiate, and made drunk with their blood.

And thus in Deut. xxxii. 42, a similar figure is used respecting arrows, the instruments also of war and vengeance:

I will make mine arrows drunk with blood;  
 And my sword shall devour flesh.

A similar figure is often used in Oriental writers, where the sword is represented as glutted, or satiated, or made drunk with blood. See Rosenmüller on Deut. xxxii. 42. Thus Bohaddinus, in the life of Saladin, in describing a battle in which there was a great slaughter, says, “The swords drank of their blood until they were intoxicated.” The idea here is, however, not that the sword of the Lord was made drunk *with blood* in heaven, but that it was intoxicated, or made furious with wrath; it was excited as an intoxicated man is who is under ungovernable passions; it was in heaven that the wrath commenced, and the sword of divine justice rushed forth, as if intoxicated, to destroy all before it. There are few figures, even in Isaiah, that are more bold and original than this. ¶ *It shall come down upon Idumea.* See the Analysis of the chapter for the situation of Idumea, and for the causes why it was to be devoted to destruction. ¶ *Upon the people of my curse.* The people devoted to destruction.

6. *The sword of the LORD is filled*



with fatness, ~~and~~ with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

[ch. 63. 1, &c.]

NEW TRANSLATION.

With the blood of lambs and goats,  
With the fat of the kidneys of rams :  
For JEHOVAH hath a sacrifice in Bozrah,  
And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.

*with blood.* The idea here is taken from the notion of sacrifice, that God would devote to sacrifice, or to destruction, the inhabitants of Idumea. With reference to that, he says, that his sword, the instrument of slaughter, should be satiated with blood; there should be so great a slaughter, that the sword should be covered with blood. ¶ *It is made fat with fatness.* The allusion here is to the sacrifices which were made for sin, in which the blood and the fat were devoted to God as an offering. See Lev. vii. ¶ *With the blood of lambs and goats, &c.* These animals were usually offered in sacrifice to God among the Jews, and to speak of a sacrifice was the same as to speak of the offering of rams, lambs, bullocks, &c. Yet it is evident here, that they denote the people of Idumea, and that these terms are used to keep up the image of a sacrifice. The idea of sacrifice was always connected with that of slaughter, as the animals were slaughtered before they were offered. So here the idea is, that there would be a great slaughter in Idumea; that it would be so far of the nature of a sacrifice that they would be devoted to God and to his cause. It is not evident that any particular classes of people are denoted by the different animals here mentioned, and the probability is, that as the animals here mentioned include all, or nearly all those usually offered in sacrifice, so the expressions denote simply that all classes of people in Idumea would be devoted to the slaughter. Grotius, however, supposes that the following classes are intended by the animals specified—to wit, by the lambs, the people in general; by the goats, the priests; by the rams,

the opulent inhabitants. ¶ *For the LORD hath a sacrifice.* That is, there will be a slaying, and the inhabitants shall be devoted by him to destruction. It shall be as if the inhabitants of Bozrah should be offered to him in the same manner as lambs are offered on the altar. ¶ *In Bozrah.* Bozrah is here mentioned as one of the chief cities of Idumea. It was a city of great antiquity, and was known among the Greeks and Romans by the name of BOSTRA. It is generally mentioned in the Scriptures as a city of the Edomites, (Isa. lxiii. 1; Amos i. 12; Jer. xlix. 13, 22,) but once it is mentioned as a city of Moab, Jer. xlviii. 24. It probably belonged at different periods to both nations, as in their wars the possession of cities often passed into different hands. Bozrah lay south-east of Edrei, one of the capitals of Bashan, and was thus not properly within the limits of the Edomites, but was north of the Ammonites, or in the region of Auranitis, or in what is now called the Haouran. It is evident, therefore, that in the time of Isaiah, the Edomites had extended their conquests to that region. According to Burckhardt, who visited the Haouran, and who went to Bozrah, it is at this day one of the most important cities in the Haouran. "It is situated," says he, "in the open plain, and is at present the last inhabited place in the south-east extremity of the Haouran; it was formerly the capital of the Arabia Provincia, and is now, including its ruins, the largest town in the Haouran. It is of an oval shape, its greatest length being from east to west; its circumference is three quarters of an hour. It was anciently encompassed with a thick

7. And the <sup>1</sup> unicorns shall land shall be <sup>2</sup> soaked with blood, come down with them, and the and their dust made fat with fatness. bullocks with the bulls; and their

<sup>2</sup> or, *drunken*.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

7. And the wild buffaloes shall fall down with them,  
And the bullocks together with the bulls;  
And their land shall be drunken with blood,  
And their ground fertilized with fat.

wall, which gave it the reputation of great strength. Many parts of this wall, especially on the west side, remain; it was constructed of stones of moderate size, strongly cemented together. The south and south-east quarters are covered with ruins of private dwellings, the walls of many of which are still standing, but the roofs are fallen in. The style of building seems to have been similar to that observed in all the other ancient towns of the Haouran. On the west side are springs of fresh water, of which I counted five beyond the precincts of the town, and six within the walls; their waters unite with a rivulet whose source is on the north-west side, within the town, and which loses itself in the southern plain at several hours' distance; it is called by the Arabs, El Djeheir. The principal ruins of Bozrah are the following:—A square building, which within is circular, and has many arches and niches in the wall. The diameter of the rotunda is four paces; its roof has fallen in, but the walls are entire. It appears to have been a Greek church.—An oblong square building, called by the natives Deir Boheiry, or the Monastery of the priest Boheiry.—The gate of an ancient house, communicating with the ruins of an edifice, the only remains of which is a large semi-circular vault.—The great mosque of Bozrah, which is certainly coeval with the first era of Mohammedanism, and is commonly ascribed to Omar el Khattab. The walls of the mosque are covered with a fine coat of plaster, upon which are many Cufic inscriptions in bas-relief, running all round the wall.—The remains of a temple,

situated on the side of a long street, which runs across the whole town, and terminates at the western gate," &c. Of these, and other magnificent ruins of temples, theatres, and palaces, all attesting its former importance, Burckhardt has given a copious description. Travels in Syria, pp. 226—235, ed. Lond. 4to, 1822.

7. And the unicorns. Marg., *rhinoceros*. This was evidently an animal that was well known in Palestine, since it is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, Num. xxxiii. 22; Deut. xxxiii. 17; Job. xxxix. 9, 10; Ps. xcii. 10; xxii. 21; xxix. 6; in all which places it is translated unicorn, or unicorns. The derivation of the word is uncertain; and it has been regarded as doubtful what animal is intended. The corresponding Arabic word denotes the *oryx*, a large and fierce species of the antelope. Gesenius supposes, however, that the *buffalo* is intended by the word; in accordance with the opinions of Schultens and De Wette. Rosenmüller also regards it as denoting the buffalo. Bochart regards it as denoting the *gazelle*, or a species of the antelope. It can hardly, however, be regarded as so small an animal as the *gazelle*. The gazelle is common in the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai; and when Laborde passed through that region, his companions killed four, "the father and mother, and two little animals a fortnight old." He says of them: "These creatures, which are very lively in their movements, endeavored to bite when they were caught; their hair is a brown yellow, which becomes pale and long as

8. For *it is* the day <sup>g</sup> of the LORD's vengeance, *and* the year of recompences for the controversy <sup>h</sup> of Zion.

<sup>g</sup> Jer. 46. 10.

<sup>h</sup> Micah 6. 1.

9. And <sup>i</sup> the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

<sup>i</sup> Deut. 29. 23.

NEW TRANSLATION.

8. For it is the day of vengeance to JEHOVAH,  
A year of recompences in the cause of Zion.

9. And her streams shall be turned into pitch,  
And her dust into brimstone,  
And her land shall become burning pitch.

the animals grow old. In appearance they resemble the Guinea pig. Their legs are of the same height, but the form of their feet is peculiar; instead of nails and claws, they have three toes in front and four behind, and they walk, like rabbits, on the whole length of the foot. The Arabs call it El Oueber, and know no other name for it. It lives upon the scanty herbage with which the rain in the neighborhood of springs supplies it. It does not burrow in the earth, its feet not being calculated for that purpose; but it conceals itself in the natural holes or clefts which it finds in the rocks." Journey through Arabia Petræa, pp. 106, 107. Lond. 8vo. 1836. Taylor (Heb. Con.) supposes it means the rhinoceros, a fierce animal that has a single horn on the nose, which is very strong, and which sometimes grows to the height of thirty-seven inches. The ancient versions certainly regarded the word as denoting an animal with a single horn. It denotes here, evidently, some strong, fierce, and wild animal that was horned, (Ps. xxii. 21.) but perhaps it is not possible to determine precisely what animal is meant. Here it represents the people; or that portion of them that were strong, warlike, and hitherto unvanquished, and that regarded themselves as invincible. ¶ *Shall come down.* Shall be subdued, humbled, destroyed. ¶ *With them.* With the lambs and goats mentioned in ver. 6. All classes of the people shall be subdued and subjected to the slaughter. ¶ *And the bul-*

*locks with the bulls.* The young bulls with the old. All shall come down together—the fierce and strong animals, representing the fierce and strong people. ¶ *And their land shall be soaked with blood.* Marg., *drunken*; the same word which is rendered "*bathed*" in ver. 5. ¶ *Their dust made fat.* Their land matured and made rich with the slain. A battle field is usually distinguished afterwards for its fertility. The field of Waterloo has thus been celebrated, since the great battle there, for producing rank and luxuriant harvests.

8. For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance. A time when JEHOVAH will take vengeance. ¶ *The year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.* The time when he will recompense, *i. e.*, punish those who have had a controversy with Zion.

9. And the streams thereof. The idea here is, that there would be utter and permanent destruction. There would be as great and awful a destruction as if the streams everywhere should become pitch or resin, which would be set on fire, and which would fill the land with flame and desolation. This image is very striking, as we may see by supposing the rivers and streams in any land to flow not with water, but with heated pitch, turpentine, or tar, and that this was all suddenly kindled into a flame. It cannot be supposed that this is to be taken literally. The image is evidently taken from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, (Gen. xix. 24

10. It shall not be quenched ration to generation it shall lie night nor day; the <sup>k</sup> smoke thereof waste; none shall pass through it shall go up for ever: from generation for ever and ever:

& Rev. 19. 2, 3.

NEW TRANSLATION.

10. Day and night it shall not be extinguished;  
For ever shall her smoke ascend.  
From generation to generation shall she be desolate;  
To eternal ages shall none pass through it.

—28) an image which is more fully used in reference to the same subject in Jer. xlix. 17, 18. "And Edom shall be a desolation;—as in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbor cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it." ¶ *And the dust thereof into brimstone.* The ruin shall be as entire as if all the soil were turned into brimstone, which should be ignited and left burning.

10. *It shall not be quenched night nor day.* That is, the burning brimstone and pitch (ver. 9), the emblem of perpetual and entire desolation, shall not be extinguished. ¶ *The smoke thereof, &c.* The smoke of the burning pitch and brimstone shall ascend constantly. Every river and rivulet is supposed to be heated pitch, and every particle of dust sulphur, and all on fire, sending up from an extended region dense columns of smoke to heaven. No idea of ruin could be more sublime; no idea of the vengeance of God more terrible. This image has been copied by John to describe the future woes of the wicked (Rev. xiv. 11), and of mystical Babylon (Rev. xviii. 9, 18; xix. 2, 3). ¶ *From generation to generation it shall lie waste.* Full confirmation of this may be seen in the travels of Setzen, of Burckhardt, of Volney, and Irby and Mangles, extracts of which have been collected and arranged by Keith (Evidences of Prophecy, pp. 135—168. Thus Volney says, "From the reports of the Arabs of Bakir, and the inhabitants of Guza, who frequently go to Maan and Karak, on the road of the pilgrims, there are to the south-east of the lake Asphaltites, (Dead Sea,) within

three days' journey, upwards of thirty ruined towns *absolutely deserted*. Several of them have large edifices, with columns that may have belonged to the ancient temples, or at least to Greek churches. The Arabs sometimes make use of them to fold cattle in; but in general avoid them on account of the enormous scorpions with which they swarm." Volney's Travels, vol. ii. pp. 344—346. It is remarkable that an *infidel*, as Volney was, should in this, as in numerous other instances, have given a striking and minute confirmation of the ancient prophecies. Setzen says, (Travels, p. 46,) that he was told, that, "at the distance of two days and a half from Hebron, he would find considerable ruins of the ancient city of Abde, and that for all the rest of the journey he would see *no place of habitation*; he would meet only with a few tribes of wandering Arabs." Burckhardt has given the following description of the eastern boundary of Edom, and of the adjoining part of Arabia Petræa:—"It might with truth be called Petræa, not only on account of its rocky mountains, but also of the elevated plain already described," (*i. e.* Shera, *Seir*, the territory of the Edomites, Travels, pp. 410, 435,) "which is so much covered with stones, especially flints, that it may with great propriety be called a stony desert, although susceptible of culture; in many places it is grown over with wild herbs, and must once have been thickly inhabited, for the traces of many towns and villages are met with on both sides of the Hadj road between Maan and Akaba, as well as between Maan and the plains of Haouran, in which direction also are

11. But the <sup>1</sup> cormorant <sup>1</sup> and in it: and he shall stretch out upon the bittern shall possess it; the it the line <sup>m</sup> of confusion, and the owl also and the raven shall dwell stones of emptiness.

<sup>1</sup> or pelican. 1 Zeph. 2. 14. Rev. 18. 2.

m 2 Kings 21. 13.

NEW TRANSLATION.

11. But the cormorant and the porcupine shall inherit it;  
And the owl and the raven shall dwell in it;

many springs. At present all this country is a desert, and Maan is the only inhabited place in it." Burckhardt's Travels, p. 436. Of the remains of ancient cities still exposed to view in different places throughout Idumea, Burckhardt describes the ruins of a large town, of which nothing remains but broken walls and heaps of stones; the ruins of several villages in its vicinity (p. 418); the ruins of an ancient city, consisting of large heaps of hewn blocks of silicious stone; and the extensive ruins of Arindela, an ancient town of Palestina Tertia, p. 441. "The following ruined places are situated in Djebel Sherah, (Mount Seir,) to the south and south-west of Wady Mousa—Kalaat Beni Madha, Djerba, Basta, Eyl, Ferdakh, Anyk, Bir el Beytar, Shemakh, and Syk," p. 444. Burckhardt also gives a most interesting description of the ruins of the ancient Petra which he discovered, the ancient capital of Edom, but which is too long to be transcribed here. See his Travels, pp. 422—432. Comp. Note on ch. xvi. 1. ¶ *None shall pass through it for ever and ever.* That is, it shall not be a thoroughfare; it shall not be a country through which caravans shall pass; there shall be no roads, and it shall not be deemed safe to travel through it. It will be recollected that the original source of all their calamities, and the cause of all the judgments that came upon them, was the fact that they would not let the children of Israel pass peaceably through their land on their way to Canaan. See the Introduction to the chapter. As a punishment for this, God now says that their land shall not be passed through; it shall not be a thoroughfare; there shall be no travellers in it. God usually directs his punishment of individuals and of nations in the line of their offences, and thus his judgments become com-

monly a recompence in kind. Thus in 2 Sam. xxii. 26, 27, it is said:

With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful;  
And with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.  
With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure;  
And with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.

In accordance with this prediction that no one should pass through Edom, Volney says, "The country has *not been visited by any traveller*, but it well merits such an attention." Travels, vol. ii. 344. Thus Burckhardt says, after he had entered, on the north-east, the territories of the Edomites, that he "was without protection in the midst of a desert *where no traveller had ever before been seen.*" Travels in Syria, p. 421. It was then, he adds, "that for the first time he had ever felt fear during his travels in the desert, and his route thither was the most dangerous he had ever travelled." p. 400. "Seetzen, on a piece of paper pasted against the wall, notified his having penetrated the country in a direct line between the Dead Sea and Mount Sinai, (through Idumea,) *a route never before accomplished.*" Burck. Syr. p. 553. Burckhardt had determined to attempt to pass the same way, as being the shortest way to Jerusalem; but he was repeatedly told it was *impossible*; and the difficulty of the journey is illustrated in the travels of Captains Irby and Mangles. They offered five hundred piastres to an Arab tribe if they would conduct them to Wady Mousa, but nothing would induce them to consent. "They said they would not go if we would give them five thousand piastres, observing that money was of no use to a man if he lost his life." p. 349. So strikingly has this prediction been fulfilled.

11. But the cormorant. This and the following verses contain a description

12. They shall call the nobles | *shall be* there, and all her princes thereof to the kingdom, but none | *shall be* nothing.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

And he shall stretch upon it the line of devastation,  
And the plummet of desolation.

12. And as to her nobles—they shall call them to the kingdom,  
and none shall be there;  
And all her princes shall fail.

of the desolations of Edom, in language remarkably similar to that employed in the account of the destruction of Babylon, ch. xiii. 20—22; xiv. 23. The word here translated *cormorant* (נֶמֶץ), occurs in this place and in Zeph. ii. 14, where it is rendered *cormorant*, and in Lev. xi. 18; Deut. xiv. 17; Ps. cii. 6, where it is rendered *pelican*. Bochart supposes it is the *ardea stellaris*, or *bitourn*, which frequents watery places in deserts, and makes a horrible noise. The pelican is a sea-fowl, and cannot be intended here. The cormorant or water-raven, is a large fowl of the pelican kind, which occupies the cliffs by the sea, feeds on fish, and which is extremely voracious, and which is the emblem of a glutton. It is not certain *what* fowl is intended here, but the word properly denotes a water-fowl, and evidently refers to some bird that inhabits desolate places. ¶ *And the bittern shall possess it.* For a description of the *bittern*, see Note, ch. xiv. 23. ¶ *The owl also and the raven.* Well known birds, that occupy deserts and old ruins of houses or towns. The image here is that of desolation and ruin; and the sense is, that the land should be reduced to a desert, or a waste, that should not be inhabited by man, but should be given up to wild animals. How well this agrees with Edom may be seen in the Travels of Burckhardt, Seetzen, and others. In regard to the fact that the cormorant (נֶמֶץ, *hāūth*) should be found there, it may be proper to introduce a remark of Burckhardt, who seems to have had no reference to this prophecy. "The bird *katta*," says he, "is met with in immense numbers. They fly in such large flocks that the boys often kill two or three of

them at a time, merely by throwing a stick among them." So also in regard to the fact that the owl and the raven shall dwell there, the following statements are made by travellers. Captain Mangles relates, that while he and his fellow-travellers were examining the ruins and contemplating the sublime scenery of Petra, "the screaming of the eagles, hawks, and owls, which were soaring above their heads in considerable numbers, seemingly annoyed at any one approaching their lonely habitation, added much to the singularity of the scene." So says Burckhardt: "The fields of Tafyle (situated in the immediate vicinity of Edom) are frequented by an immense number of crows." ¶ *And he shall stretch out upon it.* This is an allusion to the fact that an architect uses a *line*, which is employed to lay out his work. See Note, ch. xxviii. 17. ¶ *The line of confusion.* A similar expression occurs in 2 Kings xxi. 13: "I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab;" i. e. I will apply the same measure and rule of destruction to Jerusalem that has been applied to Samaria. So Edom should be marked out for desolation, and for a waste. It was the work which God had *laid out*, and which he intended to perform. ¶ *And the stones of emptiness.* Probably the plummet which the architect commonly employed with his line. See Note, ch. xxviii. 17. It is a fact, however, that Edom is at present an extended waste of stones and barren rocks. "We had before us an immense expanse of dreary country, entirely covered with black flints, with here and there some hilly chain rising from the plain." Burckhardt's Travels in Syria, p. 445.

12. They shall call the nobles, &c. A

13. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for <sup>1</sup> owls.

14. The <sup>2</sup> wild beasts of the

<sup>1</sup> daughters of the owl, or, ostriches. ch. 18. 21, 22. <sup>2</sup> Zim.

desert shall also meet with <sup>3</sup> the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the <sup>4</sup> screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.

<sup>3</sup> Jim.

or, night monster.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

13. And thorns shall spring up in her palaces;  
The nettle and bramble in her strong holds:  
And she shall become a habitation for dragons,  
A residence for ostriches.

14. And the wild cats and jackals shall meet one another;  
And the satyr shall call to his fellow:  
There also shall the night-spectre dwell quietly,  
And find for herself a place of rest.

more correct rendering of this would be, "As to the nobles, they shall call them, but there shall be there no kingdom." The idea is, that the kingdom would be desolate; there would be no people to rule. Or, the sense is, there shall be no nobles there who shall survive the destruction, and who can and will undertake the government of the ruined state. The idea is taken from a government or constitution where the monarch is chosen from the ranks of the nobility. Idumea was formerly governed, as we have seen, (see the Introduction to the chapter,) by dukes, or princes; and it is probable that when it became a monarchy it was a part of the constitution that the sovereign should be chosen from the ranks of the princes. The idea here is, that all now should be gone; none should be left who could be called to the throne; or if any were left, they would be unwilling to undertake the government of a country which had ceased to be a kingdom, or where all was disorder and confusion. ¶ *And all her princes shall be nothing.* Long since Idumea has ceased to be a kingdom, and there are neither nobles nor princes there, nor are there any remains of an organized and independent government.

13. *And thorns, &c.* See Note, ch v 6

¶ *It shall be an habitation of dragons.* On the meaning of the word *dragons*, see Note, ch. xiii. 22. ¶ *Court for owls.* A place of resort, a residence of owls. The word rendered *court* (חצר) means a dwelling-place, a habitation, as well as an inclosure, or court. The margin is, *daughters of the owl, or, ostriches.* See Note, ch. xiii. 21. "I would," says Stephens, when standing amidst the ruins of Petra, the capital of Idumea, (see Note, ch. xvi. 1,) and with this passage of Isaiah in his eye, "I would that the sceptic could stand as I did, among the ruins of this city among the rocks, and there open the sacred book, and read the words of the inspired penman, written when this desolate place was one of the greatest cities in the world. I see the scoff arrested, his cheek pale, his lip quivering, and his heart quaking with fear, as the ancient city cries out to him in a voice loud and powerful as one risen from the dead; though he would not believe Moses and the prophets, he believes the handwriting of God himself, in the desolation and eternal ruin around him." *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, &c., vol. ii. p. 76.*

14. *The wild beasts of the desert.* There is in the original here a paronomasia, or pun, which cannot be con-

15. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

16. Seek <sup>a</sup> ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one <sup>o</sup> of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.

<sup>a</sup> Is. 8. 20. John 5. 39. 2 Pet. 1. 19.  
<sup>o</sup> Matt. 5. 18. Luke 21. 33.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

15. There shall the arrow-snake make her nest, and lay her eggs;  
She shall hatch there, and nourish [her young] under her shadow;  
And there also shall the vultures be gathered together,  
Each one with her mate.
16. Search ye from the book of JEHOVAH, and read:  
Not one of these shall fail;

veyed in a translation. The word rendered "wild beasts of the desert," (דְּבַר הַבְּרָאָה,) is rendered by the LXX, δαιμόνια, demons. On the meaning of the word, see Note, ch. xiii. 21. ¶ *The wild beasts of the island.* Marg., *Ijim*, Heb. דִּימִים. See Note, ch. xiii. 22. Probably the term denotes the jackal. Gesenius supposes it is so called from its howl, or nocturnal cry—from an Arabic word signifying to howl. ¶ *And the satyr.* See Note, ch. xiii. 21. ¶ *Shall cry to his fellow.* A most shocking description of the desolation, when all that is heard among the ruins shall be the doleful cry of the wild beasts. ¶ *The screech owl, &c.* Marg., *night monster.* The word לַיְלָה (from לַי, night) properly denotes a *night-spectre*, a ghost—a creature of Jewish superstition. The Rabbins describe it in the form of a female, elegantly dressed, that lay in wait for children by night, either to carry them off, or to murder them. The Greeks had a similar idea respecting the female *Ἐμψουσα*, and this idea corresponds to the Roman fables respecting the *Lamia* and *Striges*, and to the Arabic notions of the *Ghûles*, whom they described as female monsters that dwell in deserts, and tear men to pieces. See Gesenius, Comm. in loco; and Bochart, Hieroz. t. ii. p. 831. The margin in our version expresses the correct idea. All this is descriptive of utter

and perpetual desolation—of a land that should be full of old ruins, and inhabited by the animals that usually make such ruins their abode.

15. *There shall the great owl, (νῆξ.)* Gesenius supposes that this is the *arrow-snake*, so called from its *darting*, or *springing*, in the manner of the *rattle-snake*—from an obsolete root, to *draw oneself together*, to *contract*. Bochart, in Hieroz. t. ii. lib. iii. c. xi. pp. 408—419, has examined the meaning of the word at length, and comes to the conclusion that it means the serpent which the Greeks called *acontias*, and the Latins *jaculus*—the *arrow-snake*. The serpent is oviparous, and nourishes its young. The ancient versions, however, understand it in the same sense as the *kippod* in ver. 11—the *hedge-hog*, or *porcupine*. ¶ *Under her shadow.* Shall nourish, or cherish her young. This might be done by the serpent that should coil up and cherish her young. ¶ *The vultures, &c.* The black vulture, according to Bochart; according to Gesenius, the kite, or falcon; so called from its swift flight. Either of them will suit the connexion. ¶ *Also be gathered.* Be gathered together; shall be found in great numbers. ¶ *Every one with her mate.* They shall make their nests there; that is, this shall be their home—their secure, undisturbed retreat.

16. *Seek ye out.* Look carefully at the prediction, and its fulfilment. This



17. And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein.

## NEW

No one shall lack her mate:  
For His mouth it hath commanded,  
And His Spirit it shall assemble them.

17. And He hath cast the lot for them,  
And His hand shall divide it unto them by line:  
For ever shall they possess it,  
From generation to generation shall they dwell therein.

seems to be addressed to the inhabitants of that land, or to any who might doubt, or be disposed to examine. They were invited to compare the prediction with the fulfilment, and to see how literally all would be fulfilled—an examination which may be made now, and the prediction will be seen to have been accomplished with most surprising particularity and accuracy. ¶ *The book of the LORD.* The book of JEHOVAH, which he has caused to be written, referring, perhaps, especially to what Isaiah has here recorded; including, also, what had been uttered by the other prophets in regard to Edom. The main reference is, however, doubtless, to what Isaiah has written; and the invitation is to compare his predictions with the certain and remarkable evidence of the fulfilment. "The prophet evidently contemplated the insertion of his prophecy among the sacred books of the Jews, from which those that followed him might judge of the correctness of the prophecy." *Noyes.* That a collection of the various prophetic books was made, constituting one book or volume, and regarded as the work of inspiration, is well known, and is referred to, during the captivity in Babylon, by Daniel, Dan. ix. 2. The direction to search that book accords with the command of the Saviour, John v. 39, and the direction to Nicodemus, John vii. 52, to search the Scriptures, ¶ *No one of these shall fail.* Not one of these predictions, or these things which have been spoken. ¶ *None shall want her mate.* That is, none of the

things which I have spoken shall want a fulfilment as its companion; none shall fail. The *language* is here evidently taken from the *pairing* of animals, and is language which denotes that all that is spoken shall be complete, or shall be entirely fulfilled. Some have understood this as referring to the wild animals of which he had spoken, and as meaning that in desolate Idumea they should be appropriately paired, and should breed and increase in abundance. But, perhaps, the more natural interpretation is to refer it to the predictions of the prophet, as meaning that no one thing which he had uttered should want a complete fulfilment. ¶ *For my mouth.* The word "my" is not in the Hebrew. The Hebrew phrase is, פִּי־הוּא, "For the mouth, he, or that hath commanded." The word הוּא stands for *He*; that is, Jehovah, and the phrase means the same as *his* mouth; that is, the mouth of God. The LXX render it, "For the Lord hath commanded them." Lowth renders it, "For the mouth of JEHOVAH," &c., changing הוּא into דְּהוּא, in accordance with five MSS., and the translation of the LXX. ¶ *And his Spirit.* The Spirit of God; that is, JEHOVAH himself. ¶ *Hath gathered them.* Will collect, or assemble; *i. e.*, the wild beasts spoken of in the previous verses, that shall occupy desolate Idumea. It shall be the agency of God that shall bring them up upon the land to occupy it for ever.

17. And he hath cast the lot for them. He hath assigned to them the land of

Edom, to be occupied by them as their portion. This *language* is taken from the fact that countries were commonly divided, particularly among conquerors, by the lot. In this way Judea was divided among the tribes of Israel. Num. xxvi. 55, 56. ¶ *His hand hath divided it unto them by line.* He has marked out, as a surveyor does, the land of Edom as the dwelling-place of the beasts of the forest. A land was usually surveyed and divided into proper parts or portions before the lot was cast. Josh. xviii. 4—6. ¶ *They shall possess it, &c.* The wild beasts mentioned in the previous verses. It shall be given up to perpetual desolation. The testimony of all travellers demonstrates that thus far this prediction has been strikingly fulfilled.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## ANALYSIS.

This chapter is a continuation of the prophecy commenced in the previous chapter. See the Analysis of ch. xxxiv. for a general view of the design of the prophecy. The object of the whole prophecy is, to show that all the enemies of the people of God, and particularly Edom, which had so peculiarly and grievously offended them, should be destroyed; and that the destruction of their foes should be followed by times of security, prosperity, and joy.

That this chapter refers to the times of the Messiah is apparent from the slightest inspection of it. It so clearly describes the times of the gospel; so distinctly speaks of the very works which the Redeemer in fact performed; and is so full, and rich, and beautiful, that it cannot be regarded as referring to any other period. It has in many respects a strong resemblance to the predictions in ch. xi. and xii., and is incontestably among the most beautiful of the prophecies of Isaiah.

The chapter may be divided into the following portions:—

I. The consolations which would follow the destruction of all their enemies, and the flourishing state

which would succeed; as great a change as if the wilderness were to blossom like the rose, and the glory and beauty of Lebanon and Carmel should be given to the desert. Vs. 1, 2.

II. The exhortation addressed to those in office and authority to comfort the feeble, and strengthen the weak with the assurance that those blissful times would come. Vs. 3, 4.

III. The description of the actual condition of the future period of happiness which is foretold.

(a.) The eyes of the blind would be opened, and the deaf made to hear, and the lame man be cured. There would be a display of miraculous power in restoring the blind, the deaf, and the lame, &c.; and in connexion with this there would be joy and happiness, abundance, represented by streams bursting forth in the desert. Vs. 5, 6, 7.

(b.) There would be purity. It would be a time of holiness. The way of access to these blessings would be open and free to all—even to all nations, but it would be a way for the pure only. Holiness would prevail; and none would avail themselves of these benefits who were not holy. Ver. 8.

(c.) It would be a time of safety. There would be no enemy that could overcome and subdue them. Ver. 9.

(d.) It would be a time of elevated joy—represented by the return to Zion from a long and painful captivity, ver. 10. The people of God would abide in security, and their sorrows would be ended. In the fulness of the blessings of the reign of the Messiah all their sorrow and sighing would flee away. Ver. 10.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

1. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them;

and \* the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

Is. ch. 55. 12, 13.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

1. The wilderness and the parched land shall be glad on account of these things;  
And the desert shall blossom as the rose.

1. *The wilderness and the solitary place.* This is evidently figurative language, such as is often employed by the prophets. The word rendered "solitary place" (מִדְבָּר) denotes, properly, a dry place; a place without springs and streams of water; and as such places produce no verdure, and nothing to sustain life, the word comes to mean a desert. Such expressions are often used in the Scriptures to express moral or spiritual desolation; and in this sense evidently the phrase is used here. It does not refer to the wastes or desolations of Judea, but to all places that might be properly called a moral wilderness, or a spiritual desert; and thus aptly expresses the condition of the heathen world that was to be benefited by the blessings foretold in this chapter. The parallel expressions in ch. xli 17—19, xliv. 3, 4, show that this is the sense in which the phrase is here used; and that the meaning is, that every situation which might be appropriately called a moral wilderness—that is, the whole heathen world—would ultimately be made glad. The sense is, that as great and happy changes would take place in regard to those desolations as if the wilderness should become a vast field producing the lily and the rose; or as if (ver. 2) there should be imparted to such places the glory of Lebanon, and the beauty and fertility of Sharon and Carmel. ¶ *Shall be glad for them.* This is evidently a personification, a beautiful poetic figure by which the wilderness is represented as expressing joy. The sense is, the desolate moral world would be filled with joy on account of the blessings which are here predicted. The phrase "for them," expressed in

Heb. by the affix ׁ, means, doubtless, on account of the blessings which are foretold in this prophecy. Lowth supposes, however, that the letter has been added to the word "shall be glad," יִשְׂמְחוּ, by mistake, because the following word begins with a ׁ. The reading of the present Hebrew text is followed by none of the ancient versions; but it is, nevertheless, probably the correct reading, and there is no authority for changing it. The sense is expressed above by the phrase, "shall rejoice on account of the things contained in this prophecy;" to wit, the destruction of all the foes of God, and the universal establishment of his kingdom. Those who wish to see a more critical examination of the words here used, may find it in Rosenmüller and Gesenius. ¶ *And blossom as the rose.* The word rendered rose (רֹז) occurs only here and in Cant. ii. 1, where it is also rendered a rose. The LXX render it the lily, (κρίνον.) The Vulgate also renders it lilium—the lily. The Syriac renders it also by a word which signifies the lily, or narcissus; or, according to the Syriac lexicographers, the meadow saffron, an autumnal flower springing from poisonous bulbous roots, and of a white and violet color. The sense is not, however, affected materially whatever be the meaning of the word. Either the rose, the lily, or the saffron, would convey the idea of beauty compared with the solitude and desolation of the desert. The word rose with us—as being a flower better known—conveys a more striking image of beauty, and there is no impropriety in retaining it.

2. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon<sup>b</sup> shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.
3. Strengthen<sup>c</sup> ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

<sup>b</sup> Hos. 14. 5, 6.<sup>c</sup> Heb. 12. 12.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

2. It shall blossom abundantly, and exult with joy and singing;  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
The beauty of Carmel and of Sharon:  
They shall see the glory of JEHOVAH,  
The majesty of our God.
3. Strengthen ye the hands that are weak,  
And confirm the tottering knees.

2. *It shall blossom abundantly.* Heb., "blossoming it shall blossom;" a common mode of expression in Hebrew, denoting *certainly, abundance, fulness*—similar to the expression, (Gen. ii. 17.) "Dying thou shalt die," i. e., thou shalt surely die. The sense here is, it shall certainly blossom, or it shall blossom in abundance. ¶ *And rejoice even with joy, &c.* Strong figurative language, denoting the change, and the greatness of the blessings; as great as if in the lone desert and in the waste wilderness, there should be heard the voice of joy and rejoicing. The LXX render this, "the deserts of Jordan also bloom and rejoice;" and Jerome applies this to the preaching of John in the wilderness adjacent to Jordan. The LXX evidently read יְרֵד, instead of the Hebrew יְרֵד. Lowth has followed this, and rendered it, "the well-watered plain of Jordan shall rejoice," but without any authority from Heb. MSS. for the change. ¶ *The glory of Lebanon.* The glory or ornament of Lebanon was its cedars. For a description of Lebanon, see Note, ch. x. 34. The sense here is, that the change would be as great under the blessings of the Messiah's reign as if there should be suddenly transferred to the waste wilderness the majesty and glory of Mount Lebanon. ¶ *The excellency of Carmel.* Carmel was emblematic of beauty, as Lebanon was of majesty, and as Sharon was of fertility.

For a description of Carmel, see Note, ch. xxix. 17; of Sharon, see Note, ch. xxxiii. 9. The sense is clear. The blessings of the times of the Messiah would be as great, compared with what had existed before, as if the desert were made as lovely as Carmel, and as fertile as Sharon. The world, that in regard to comfort, intelligence, and piety, might be compared to a vast, pathless desert, should be like the beauty of Carmel and the fertility of Sharon. ¶ *They shall see.* The deserts shall see; or the inhabitants of the desolate world shall see. ¶ *The glory of the Lord.* As manifested under the Messiah.

3. *Strengthen ye, &c.* That is, you who are in office; you who are the religious teachers and guides of the people. This is an address made by the prophet in view of what he had said and was about to say of the promised blessings. The sense is, strengthen and sustain the feeble and the desponding by the promised blessings; by the assurances (ch. xxxiv.) that all the enemies of God and his people will be destroyed; and that he will manifest himself as their protector, and send upon them the promised blessings. Or it may be regarded as addressed to those who should have influence and authority—the officers and ministers of religion—when these blessings should have come; and as being an exhortation to them to make use of the influences, the promises, and the consolations which would

4. Say to them *that are* of a <sup>1</sup> fearful heart, Be strong, fear <sup>d</sup> not: behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *even* God *with* a recompence; he will come and save <sup>c</sup> you.
5. Then <sup>f</sup> the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

! *hasty.*

d ch. 44. 2.

e ch. 25. 9. Luke 21. 28. f Matt. 11. 5.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

4. Say to the faint-hearted, "Be strong; fear not; "Lo! your God!  
"Vengeance cometh; the retribution of God!  
"He will come and save you!"
5. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened;  
And the ears of the deaf be unstopped.

attend the coming of the Messiah, to strengthen the feeble and confirm those who were faint-hearted. ¶ *The weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.* Strength resides mainly in the arms, and in the lower limbs, or the knees. If these are feeble, the whole frame is feeble. *Fear* relaxes the strength of the arms, and the firmness of the knees; and the expressions, "weak hands," and "feeble knees," become synonymous with saying, of a *timid, fearful, and desponding* frame of mind. Such were to be strengthened by the assurance of the favor of God, and by the consolations which would flow from the reign of the Messiah. The Jews, who looked abroad upon the desolations of their country, were to be comforted and strengthened by the hope of future blessings; those who lived in those future times were to be consoled by the assurances of the favor of God through the Messiah. Comp. Notes, ch. xl. 1.

4. *Say to them.* This is still an address to the officers and ministers of religion, to make use of all the consolations which these truths and predictions furnish to confirm and strengthen the people of God. ¶ *Of a fearful heart.* Of a timid, pusillanimous heart; those who tremble before their enemies. The Hebrew is, as in the margin, "of a *hasty* heart;" that is, of those who are disposed to *flee* before their enemies. See Note, ch. xxx. 16. ¶ *Be strong, &c.* In the assurance that God will come

and save you. ¶ *Behold, your God will come with vengeance.* That is, in the manner described in the previous chapter; and, generally, he will take vengeance on *all* the enemies of his people, and they shall be punished. The language in this chapter is, in part, derived from the captivity at Babylon (ver. 10), and the general idea is, that God would take vengeance on *all* their enemies, and would bring them complete and final deliverance. This does not mean that when the Messiah should come, *he* would be disposed to take vengeance; nor do the words "your God," here refer to the Messiah; but it is meant that their God—JEHOVAH—would certainly come and destroy all their enemies, and prepare the way thus for the coming of the Prince of Peace. The general promise is, that however many enemies might attack them, or however much they might fear them, yet that JEHOVAH would be their Protector, and would completely humble and prostrate all their foes.

5. *Then.* In that future time; during the period embraced in the promise; as the result of his coming to save you from your enemies. ¶ *The eyes of the blind shall be opened.* The images in this verse and the following are images of joy and exultation. They describe the times of happiness when God would come to save them from their foes. This passage is so accurate a description of what the Messiah, the Lord Jesus,

6. Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters <sup>8</sup> break out, and streams in the desert.

g ch. 41. 18; 43. 19.

NEW TRANSLATION.

6. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart,  
And the tongue of the dumb shall sing;  
For in the wilderness shall waters break forth,  
And streams in the desert.

did, that it doubtless refers to the miracles which he would perform. In not a few instances did he, in fact, restore the blind to sight, giving thus the most unequivocal proof that he was the Messiah sent from God. Matt. ix. 27; xx. 30; Mark viii. 23; x. 46; Luke vii. 21. It is a full confirmation of the opinion that this passage refers to the Messiah, that the Saviour himself appeals to the fact that he restored the blind to sight, as demonstration that he was the Messiah, implying that it was predicted that this would be a part of his appropriate work. Matt. xi. 5. Comp. Luke iv. 18. ¶ *And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.* Another demonstration of divine power, and another proof that should be furnished that the Messiah was from God. The Lord Jesus often gave this demonstration that he was invested with divine power. Matt. xi. 5; Mark vii. 32, 37; ix. 25.

6. *Then shall the lame man leap.* This was literally fulfilled after the coming of the Messiah. Acts xiv. 10; iii. 8. It is an emblem of the general joy which the coming of the Messiah would impart; and is an instance of the blessings which it would convey. ¶ *As an hart.* The word here used denotes the stag, or male deer. In Arabic it denotes the wild, or mountain goat; the chamois. The word sometimes refers to any species of deer or antelope; and this is referred to here from its quick and sprightly nature. ¶ *And the tongue of the dumb sing.* Shall be able to sing, and to praise God. On the restoration of the dumb to the benefits of language, see Matt. ix. 32, 33; Luke xi. 14; Matt. xii. 22; xv. 30, 31; Mark ix. 17.

¶ *For in the wilderness shall waters break out, &c.* The joy shall be as great, and the blessings as numerous and refreshing, as if running fountains should suddenly break out in the desert, and the thirsty and weary traveller should be thus unexpectedly and fully supplied. The world, in regard to its real comforts without the gospel, may be not unaptly compared to a vast waste of pathless sands and arid plains. Nothing will more strongly express the blessings of the gospel than the idea of cool, refreshing, abundant fountains and streams bursting forth in such pathless wastes. This is an image which would be very expressive to those who were accustomed to cross such deserts, and it is one which is frequently employed by the sacred writers, and especially by Isaiah. See Isa. xliiii. 19, 20; xlviii. 21; xlix. 10; li. 1; lviii. 11. "Lameness and dumbness are the uniform effects of long walking in a desert; the sand and gravel produce the former, fatigue the latter. In such cases, some of us have walked hours together without uttering a sentence; and all walked as if crippled, from the sand and gravel getting into the shoes; but the sight of water, especially if unexpected, unloosed every tongue, and gave agility to every limb; men, oxen, goats, sheep and dogs ran with speed and expressions of joy to the refreshing element."—*Campbell, Travels in Africa.* The Chaldee Paraphrast understands this as referring entirely to the return from the captivity at Babylon. "Then shall they see the exiles of Israel assembled, ascend to their own land as the swift stags, so that they shall not be hindered."

7. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs<sup>h</sup> of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be*<sup>1</sup> grass with reeds and rushes.

<sup>h</sup> John 4. 14; 7. 38.

<sup>1</sup> or, a court for.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

7. And the Serab [*Mirage*] shall become a pool,  
And the thirsty ground springs of water;  
In the habitation of dragons, where each lay,  
Shall be a dwelling for reeds and rushes.

7. *And the parched ground shall become a pool.* The idea is the same here as in the previous verse, that under the Messiah blessings should be as great as if "the parched ground" should become a lake of pure and refreshing water. The words "parched ground," however, probably do not convey the sense which Isaiah intended. The image which he had in his eye is much more striking and beautiful than that which is denoted by the "parched ground." Lowth translates it, "the glowing sand." The LXX, "the dry place," ἀνύδρος. The Hebrew word, שָׁרָב, *Shārāb*, properly denotes the heat of the sun (Isa. xlix. 10), and then the phenomena which is produced by the refraction of the rays of the sun on the glowing sands of a desert, and which gives the appearance of a sea or lake of water, so that the most experienced travellers are often deceived. This phenomenon is witnessed in the deserts of Arabia and Egypt, and has been also seen occasionally in the south of France, and in Russia. We have no word in English to express it. The French word by which it is commonly designated is *mirage*. It is caused by the refraction of the rays of the sun, an explanation of which may be found in the Edinburgh Encyclopædia, vol. xiv. pp. 753—755. It is often described by travellers, and is referred to in the Koran, ch. xxiv. 39:

The works of unbelievers are like the Serab in a plain,

Which the thirsty man takes to be water, until he comes to it, and finds that it is not.

Mr. Sale's note on this place in the Koran is, "The Arabic word *Serab* signifies that false appearance which in

the eastern countries is often seen in sandy plains about noon, resembling a large lake of water in motion, and is occasioned by the reverberation of the sun-beams, 'by the quivering, undulating motion of that quick succession of vapors and exhalations which are extracted by the powerful influence of the sun.' (Shaw's Travels, p. 378.) It sometimes tempts thirsty travellers out of their way, but deceives them when they come near, either going forward, (for it always appears at the same distance,) or quite vanishes." Q. Curtius also has mentioned it, in the description of the march of Alexander the Great across the Oxus to Sogdiana: "The vapor of the summer sun inflamed the sands, which when they began to be inflamed, all things seemed to burn. A dense cloud, produced by the unusual heat of the earth, covered the light, and the appearance of the plains was like a vast and deep sea." Curt., vii. 5. The Arabians often refer to this in their writings, and draw images from it. "Like the Serab of the plain, which the thirsty take to be water." "He runs for the spoil of the Serab,"—a proverb. "Deceitful as the appearance of water,"—a proverb also. "Be not deceived by the glimmer of the Serab,"—another proverb. This appearance has been often described by modern travellers. See Shaw's Travels, p. 375; Clarke's Travels, vol. ii. p. 295; Belzoni's Travels and Operations in Egypt and Nubia, p. 196. The same appearance has been observed in India, and in various parts of Africa. "During the French expedition to Egypt, the phenomena of unusual refractions were

8. And an highway shall be | there, and a way, and it shall be

NEW TRANSLATION.

8. And a highway shall be there, and a path;  
And it shall be called "The holy way;"

often seen. The uniformity of the extensive sandy plains of Lower Egypt is interrupted only by small eminences, on which the villages are situated, in order to escape the inundations of the Nile. In the morning and the evening, as many have remarked, objects appear in their natural position; but when the surface of the sandy ground is heated by the sun, the land seems at a certain distance terminated by a general inundation. The villages which are beyond it appear like so many islands situated in the middle of a great lake; and under each village is an inverted image of it. As the observer approaches the limits of the apparent inundation, the imaginary lake which seemed to encircle the village withdraws itself, and the same illusion is reproduced by another village more remote." Edin. Encyc. vol. xiv. p. 754. See Gesenius also, and Rosenmüller on this place. It is frequently seen now. "In the desert," says Prof. Robinson, "we had frequent instances of the *mirage*, presenting the appearance of lakes of water and islands; and as we began to descend towards Suez, it was difficult to distinguish between these appearances and the distant real waters of the Red Sea." Travels in Palestine and the adjacent regions, in 1838. Bib. Repos. April 1839, p. 402. The idea of the prophet, if he refers, as I suppose he does, to this phenomenon, is exceedingly beautiful. It is, that the *mirage*, which has the appearance only of a sheet of water, and which often deceives the traveller, shall become a *real* lake; that there shall be hereafter no deception, no illusion; that man, like a traveller on pathless sands, weary and thirsty, shall no more be deluded and deceived by false appearances and unreal hopes. The hopes and promises which this world can furnish are as delusive as is the *mirage* to the exhausted and thirsty traveller. Man approaches them,

and, like that delusive appearance, they recede or vanish. If they are still seen, they are always at a distance; and he follows the false and delusive appearance till he comes to the end of life. But the blessings of religion, the promises of God through the Messiah, are like *real* lakes of water and running streams to the thirsty traveller. They never deceive, never recede, never vanish, never are unsatisfactory. Man may approach them, knowing that there is no illusion; he may satisfy his wants, and still the supply is unexhausted, and inexhaustible. Others also may approach the same fountain of pure joy, with as much freedom as other travellers may approach the running stream in the desert. ¶ *In the habitation of dragons.* See Note, ch. xiii. 22. The sense of this is plain. The idea is, that the blessings which are promised shall be as great as if in such dry and desolate places there should be verdure and beauty. ¶ *Where each lay.* In every place which the wild beast had occupied. ¶ *Shall be grass.* Margin, *a court for.* The Hebrew word *רֶחַץ*, may mean either *grass*, or it may mean *a court*, or a habitation. The latter is undoubtedly the meaning of the word here, and thus it responds in the parallelism to the "*habitation of dragons.*"

In the *habitation* where each lay,  
Shall be a *court* for reeds and rushes.

¶ *Reeds and rushes.* These usually grew by ponds and marshes. The image which the prophet had been employing was that of a desert of sands and arid plains. He here says, that there should be *verdure*. In those pathless wastes there should spring up that which was nourished by water. The sense is, that those portions of the earth which are covered with moral desolation, like the pathless wastes of the desert, shall put on the appearance of moral cultivation and verdure.

8. And an highway shall be there.



called The way of holiness; the unclean<sup>1</sup> shall not pass over it;<sup>1</sup> but it *shall be* for those: the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*.

<sup>1</sup> ch. 52. 1. Joel 3. 17. Rev. 21. 27.

<sup>1</sup> or, for he shall be with them.

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. 34. 25.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

No unclean person shall pass through it,  
But He himself shall be with them walking in the way.  
And the simple shall not mistake [the path.]

9. No lion shall be there;

See Note, xi. 16. This is *language* which is derived from the return of the Jews from captivity. The idea is, that there should be easy and uninterrupted access to their own land. The more remote, though main idea in the mind of the prophet seems to have been, that the way of access to the blessings of the Messiah's reign would be open and free to all. Comp. ch. xl. 3, 4. ¶ *And a way.* It is not easy to mark the difference between the word *way*, *דֶּרֶךְ*, and a highway *חֵמֶשׁ*. Probably the latter refers more particularly to a *raised way* (from *לָמַד*, to cast up,) and would be expressed by our word *cause-way* or *turnpike*. It was such a way as was usually made for the march of armies, by removing obstructions, filling valleys, &c. The word *way*, *דֶּרֶךְ*, is a more general term, and denotes a path, or road of any kind. ¶ *And it shall be called The way of holiness.* The reason why it should be so called is stated. No impure person should travel it. The idea is, that all who should have access to the favor of God, or who should come into his kingdom, should be holy. ¶ *The unclean.* The impure, the defiled, the sinful. Holiness shall be demanded of all who come into the kingdom of God. There shall be no idolater there; no one shall be admitted who is not a pure worshipper of JEHOVAH. Such is the design of the kingdom which is set up by the Messiah, and such the church of Christ should be. ¶ *Shall not pass over it.* It shall be trod only by the holy and the pure. The image of a *highway* to express the kingdom of the Messiah, is one that is

often employed by Isaiah. See ch. xl. 3, 4; xlix. 11; lxii. 10. ¶ *But it shall be for those.* For those who are specified immediately; for the ransomed of the Lord. The margin is, "For he shall be with them." Lowth reads it, "But he himself shall be with them, walking in the way."

And this, it seems to me, is the more probable sense of the passage, indicating that they should not go alone or unprotected. It would be a holy way, because then God would be with them; it would be safe, because he would attend and defend them. ¶ *The way-faring men.* Heb., "He walking in the way." According to the translation proposed above, this refers to God, the Redeemer, who will be with his people, walking in the way with them. ¶ *Though fools.* Heb., "And fools." That is, the simple, the unlearned, or those who are regarded as fools. The path shall be straight and plain. It shall be a highway thrown up so direct, and so unlike other paths, that there shall be no danger of mistaking it, even by the most simple and unlettered. The friends of God are often regarded as fools by the world. Many of them are of the humbler class of life, and are destitute of human learning, and of worldly wisdom. The sense here is, that the way of salvation shall be so plain, that no one, however ignorant and unlearned, need err in regard to it. In accordance with this, the Saviour said that the gospel was preached to the poor; and he himself represented the way to life always as such that the most simple and unlettered might find it.

9. No lion shall be there. Lions

*any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:*

## NEW TRANSLATION.

Nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon,  
Nor shall it be found there:  
But the redeemed shall walk there.

abounded in all the countries adjacent to Palestine, and even in that land. They are, therefore, often referred to by the sacred writers, as objects of dread and alarm. The leading idea in the *language* of Isaiah in this whole passage is that of a way constructed from Babylon to Judea, so straight and plain that the most simple of the people might find it and walk in it. But *such* a path would lie partly through desert sands, and partly through a wilderness. It would be in the region that would naturally be infested with lions and other wild beasts. The prophet, therefore, suggests that there should be no cause for such dread and alarm. The sense is, that in that kingdom to which he had main reference all would be *safe*. They who entered it should be protected; they should be delivered from their fears; they should find security and defence as they travelled that road. And it *is* true. They who return to God, who enter the path that leads to life, find there no cause of alarm. Their fears subside; their apprehensions of punishment on account of their sins die away; and they walk the path of life with security and confidence. There is nothing *in* that way to alarm them; and though there may be many foes—fitly represented by lions and wild beasts—lying about the way, yet no one is permitted to “go up thereon.” It is a way for the righteous; and they are safe. This is a most beautiful image of the safety of the people of God, and of their freedom from all enemies that could annoy them. ¶ *But the redeemed shall walk there.* The *language* here refers doubtless to those who would be rescued from the captivity at Babylon; but the main reference is to

those who would be redeemed by the blood of the atonement; or who are properly called “the redeemed of the Lord.” That Isaiah was acquainted with the doctrine of redemption is apparent from his fifty-third chapter. There is not here, indeed, any express mention made of the *means* by which they would be redeemed, but the *language* is so general that it may refer either to the deliverance from the captivity at Babylon, or the future more important deliverance of his people from the bondage of sin by the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah. On the word rendered *redeem*, see Note, ch. xliii. 1. The idea is, that the path here referred to is appropriately designed only for the redeemed of the Lord. It is not for the profane, the polluted, the hypocrite. It is not for those who live for this world, or for those who love pleasure more than they love God. The church should not be entered except by those who have evidence that they are redeemed. None should make a profession of religion who have not evidence that they belong to “the redeemed,” and who are not disposed to walk in the way of holiness. But, *for* all such it is a highway cast up in this world, on which they are to travel. It is made by levelling hills and elevating valleys; it is made across the sandy desert and through the wilderness of this world; it is made through a world infested with the enemies of God and his people. It is made straight and plain so that none need err; it is defended from enemies so that all may be safe; it is rendered secure, because “He,” their Leader and Redeemer, shall go with them and guard that way.

10. And the ransomed <sup>i</sup> of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs <sup>m</sup> and everlasting joy <sup>n</sup> upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow <sup>o</sup> and sighing shall flee away.

*i* ch. 51. 11.

*m* Rev. 5. 9.

*n* Jude 24.

*o* Rev. 7. 17; 21. 4.

NEW TRANSLATION.

10. Yea the ransomed of JEHOVAH shall return,  
And they shall come to Zion with songs,  
And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads:  
Joy and gladness shall they obtain,  
And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

10. *And the ransomed of the LORD.* Those ransomed by JEHOVAH. The word here rendered *ransomed* is different from the word rendered *redeemed* in ver. 9. This word is רָצוּ, from רָצָה; though it is not easy, perhaps not possible, to designate the difference in the sense. Doubtless there was a shade of difference among the Hebrews, but what it was is not now known. See this word explained in the Note on ch. i. 27. The *language* here is all derived from the deliverance from Babylon, and the images employed by the prophet relate to that event. Still, there can be no doubt that he meant to describe the deliverance under the Messiah. ¶ *Shall return, and come to Zion.* This language also is that which expresses the return from Babylon. In a more general sense, and in the sense intended particularly by the prophet, it means, doubtless, that *all* who are the redeemed of God shall come to him; shall be gathered under his protection, and shall be saved. ¶ *With songs.* With rejoicing—as the ransomed captives would return from Babylon, and as all who are redeemed enter the church on earth, and will enter into heaven above. ¶ *And everlasting joy upon their heads.* This may be an expression denoting the fact that joy is manifest in the face and aspect. *Gesenius.* Thus we say that joy lights up the countenance; and it is possible that the Hebrews expressed this idea by applying it to the head. Thus the Hebrews say (Ps. cxxvi. 2):

Then was our mouth filled with laughter,  
And our tongue with singing.

Or it may refer to the practice of *anointing* the head with oil and perfume in times of festivity and joy—in contrast with the custom of throwing ashes on the head in times of grief and calamity. *Rosenmüller.* Or it may refer to a custom of wearing a wreath or chaplet of flowers in times of festivity, as is often done now, and as was commonly done among the ancients in triumphal processions. *Vitringa.* Whichever exposition be adopted, the idea is the same, that there would be great joy, and that that joy would be perpetual and unfading. This is true of all who return to Zion under the Messiah. *Joy* is one of the first emotions; joy at redemption, and at the pardon of sin; joy in view of the hopes of eternal life, and of the everlasting favour of God. And this joy is not short-lived and fading, like the garland of flowers on the head; it is constant, increasing, everlasting. ¶ *And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.* See Note on ch. xxv. 8.

This is a most beautiful close of this prophecy; and indeed of the *series* or succession of prophecies which we have been thus far contemplating. The result of all is, that the redeemed of the Lord shall have joy and rejoicing; that all their enemies shall be subdued; and that they shall be rescued from all their foes. In the analysis of the prophecy contained in the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth chapters, it was stated that this prophecy seemed to be a *summary* of all that Isaiah had before uttered, and was designed to show that all the enemies of the people of God should be destroyed, and that they

should be triumphantly delivered and saved. All these minor deliverances were preparatory to and emblematic of the greater deliverance under the Messiah; and accordingly all his predictions look forward to, and terminate in that. In the portions of prophecy which we have been over, we have seen the people of God represented as in danger from the Syrians, the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Babylonians; and in reference to them *all* the same result has been predicted, that they would be delivered from them, and that their enemies would be destroyed. This has been, in the chapters which we have passed over, successively foretold of Damascus, of Egypt, of Moab, of Ethiopia, of Babylon, of Edom, and of Sennacherib; and the prophet has reached the conclusion that *ALL* the enemies of God's people would ultimately be destroyed, and that they would be safe under the reign of the Messiah, to which all their deliverances were preparatory, and in which they all would terminate. Having pursued this course of the prophecy; having looked at all these foes; having seen them in vision all destroyed; having seen the Prince of Peace come; having seen the wonders that he would perform; having seen all danger subside, and the preparation made for the eternal security and joy of all his people, the prophet closes this series of predictions with the beautiful statement now before us, "the redeemed of *JEHOVAH* shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### ANALYSIS.

This chapter commences the historical portion of Isaiah, which continues to the close of the thirty-ninth chapter. The main subject is the destruction of Sennacherib and his army, ch. xxxvi., xxxvii. It contains also an account of the sickness and recovery of Hezekiah; the song with which Hezekiah celebrated his recovery; and an account of his ostentation in showing his treasures

to the ambassadors of the king of Babylon, ch. xxxviii., xxxix. In 2 Chron. xxxii. 32, the following record occurs. "Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold they are written in the vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz;" and it is to this portion of Isaiah to which the author of the Book of Chronicles doubtless refers.

There was an obvious propriety in Isaiah's inserting in his prophecy an account of the invasion and destruction of Sennacherib. That event has occupied a considerable portion of his prophetic announcements; and as he lived to see them fulfilled, it was proper that he should make a record of the event. The prophecy and its fulfilment can thus be compared together; and while there is the strongest internal testimony that the prophecy was uttered before the event, there is also the most striking and clear fulfilment of all the predictions on the subject.

A parallel history of these transactions occurs in 2 Kings xvii.—xx.; and in 2 Chron. xxxii. The history in Chronicles, though it contains an account of the same transaction, is evidently by another hand, as it bears no further resemblance to this than that it contains a record of the same transactions. But between the account here and in 2 Kings, there is a most striking resemblance, so much so as to show that they were mainly by the same hand. It has been made a matter of inquiry whether Isaiah was the original author, or whether he copied a history which he found in the Book of Kings, or whether both he and the author of the Book of Kings copied from some original document which is now lost, or whether the collectors of the prophetic writings after the return from the captivity at Babylon, judging that such a history would appropriately come in here, and explain the prophecies of Isaiah, copied the account from some historical record, and inserted it among the prophecies of Isaiah. This last is the opinion of Rosenmüller—an opinion which evidently lacks all historical evidence, and indeed all probability. The most obvious and fair

supposition undoubtedly is, that this history was inserted here by Isaiah, or that he made this record according to the statement in 2 Chron. xxxii. 32. Gesenius also accords substantially with Rosenmüller in supposing that this history is an *elaboration* of that in the Book of Kings, and that it was reduced to its present form by some one who collected and edited the Books of Isaiah after the Babylonish captivity. Vitringa supposes that both the accounts in Kings and in Isaiah have been derived from a common historical document, and have been adopted and somewhat abridged or modified by the author of the Book of Kings, and by Isaiah.

It is impossible now to determine the truth in regard to this subject; nor is it of much importance. Those who are desirous of seeing the subject discussed more at length may consult Vitringa, Rosenmüller, and Gesenius. The view of Gesenius is chiefly valuable because he has gone into a comparison of the account in Isaiah with that in Kings. The following remarks are all that occur to me as desirable to make, and express the conclusion which I have been able to form on the subject.

(1.) The two accounts have a common origin, or are substantially the production of the same hand. This is apparent on the face of them. The same course of the narrative is pursued, and the same expressions occur, and the same mode and style of composition are found. It is *possible*, indeed, that the Holy Spirit might have inspired two different authors to adopt the same style and expressions in recording the same events, but this is not the mode elsewhere observed in the Scriptures. Every sacred writer is allowed to pursue his own mode of narration, and to express himself in a style and manner of his own.

(2.) There is no *evidence* that the two accounts were abridged from a more full narrative. Such a thing is *possible*; nor is there any impropriety in the supposition. But it lacks historical support. That there *were* histories among the Jews which are now lost; that there were public records which

were the fountains whence the authors of the histories which we now have, drew their information, no one can doubt who reads the Old Testament. Thus we have accounts of the writings of Gad, and Iddo the seer, and Nathan, and the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and of the Book of Jehu the prophet (2 Chron. ix. 29, xx. 34; 1 Kings xvi. 1), all of which are now lost except so far as they are incorporated in the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament. It is *possible*, therefore, that these accounts may have been abridged from some such common record, but there is no historical testimony to the fact.

(3.) There is no *evidence* that these chapters in Isaiah were inserted by Ezra, or the other inspired men who collected the sacred writings, and who formed them into a volume, and published a *recension*, or an edition of them after the return from Babylon. That there was such a work performed by Ezra and his contemporaries is the testimony of all the Jewish historians. See Dr. Alexander on the canon of Scripture. But there is no historical evidence that they thus introduced into the writings of Isaiah an entire historical narrative from the previous histories, or that they composed this history to be inserted here. It is done nowhere else. And had it been done on this occasion, and in this manner, we should have had reason to expect that they would have inserted historical records of the fulfilment of *all* the other prophecies which had been fulfilled. We should have looked, therefore, for historical statements of the downfall of Damascus and Syria; of the destruction of Samaria, of Moab, of Babylon, &c., as proofs of the fulfilment of the predictions of Isaiah. There can be no reason why the account of the destruction of Sennacherib should have been singled out and inserted in preference to others. And this is especially true in regard to *Babylon*. The prophecy of Isaiah (ch. xiii., xiv.) had been most striking and clear; the fulfilment had also been most remarkable; Ezra and his contemporaries must have felt a

much deeper interest in that than in the destruction of Sennacherib; and it is unaccountable, therefore, if they inserted this narrative respecting Sennacherib, that they did not give us a full account also of the overthrow of Babylon, and of their deliverance, as showing the fulfilment of the prophecies on that subject.

(4.) The author of the Books of Kings is unknown. There is reason to believe that these books, as well as the Books of Chronicles, and some other of the historical books of the Old Testament, were written by the prophets; or at least compiled and arranged by some inspired man from historical sketches that were made by the prophets. To such sketches or narratives we find frequent reference in the books themselves. Thus Nathan the prophet, and Ahijah the Shilonite, and Iddo the seer, recorded the acts of Solomon (2 Chron. ix. 29); thus the same Iddo the seer and Shemaiah the prophet recorded the acts of Rehoboam (2 Chron. xii. 15); thus the acts of Jehoshaphat were written in the Book of Jehu (2 Chron. xx. 34); and thus Isaiah wrote the acts of King Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 22), and also of Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 32). Many of these historical sketches or fragments have not come down to us; but all that was essential to us has been doubtless incorporated into the sacred narrative, and transmitted to our own times. It is not improbable that many of these histories were mere fragments or public documents; narratives or sketches of a single reign, or some important fact in a reign, which were subsequently revised and inserted in the more extended history, so that, after all, it may be that we have all, or nearly all of those fragments incorporated in the histories which we now possess.

(5.) As Isaiah is thus known to have written some portions of the history of the kings, it is probable that his history would be incorporated into the record of the kings by whomsoever that record might be composed. Indeed, the composition of the entire Books of Kings has been ascribed by many writers to

Isaiah, though Grotius and some others ascribe it to Jeremiah. The general and the probable opinion is, however, that the Books of Kings were digested into their present form by Ezra. It is probable, therefore, I think, that Isaiah wrote the chapters in Kings respecting the invasion of Sennacherib, and that the compiler of the Books of Kings, whoever he might be, adopted the fragment as a part of his history; and it is probable that the portion which we have here in Isaiah is the same fragment revised, abridged in some places, and enlarged in others, to adapt it to his purpose in introducing it into his book of prophecy. But it is admitted that this is conjecture. Every consideration, however, must lead us to suppose that this is the work of Isaiah. Comp. the Intro. § 5, pp. xxxvi—xxxix.

The portion of history contained in these chapters differs from the record in the Kings in several respects. There is no difference in regard to the historical facts, but the difference has respect to the fulness of the narratives, and to the change of a few words. The most material difference is that a few sentences, and members of sentences, are omitted in Isaiah which are found in Kings. These variations we shall notice in the exposition, and it is not necessary more particularly to refer to them here.

The xxxvth chapter contains the following parts, or subjects. (i.) Sennacherib, having taken most of the strong holds of Judea, sent Rabshakeh with a great force to besiege Jerusalem, and to summon it to surrender, vs. 1, 2. (ii.) Hezekiah sent an embassy to meet with Rabshakeh, evidently to induce him to depart from the city, ver. 3. (iii.) This embassy Rabshakeh addressed in a proud, insolent, and taunting speech, reproaching them with putting their trust in Egypt, and with their feebleness, and assuring them that Sennacherib had come up against the city at the command of ЈЕHOVAH, vs. 4—10. (iv.) The Jewish embassy requested Rabshakeh to speak in the Aramian, or Syrian language, that the common people on the wall might not hear, ver. 11. (v.) To this, he replied that he

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

1. Now <sup>a</sup> it came to pass in the<sup>a</sup> 2 Kings 18. 13, &c. 2 Chron. 32. 1, &c.

NEW TRANSLATION.

CHAP. XXXVI.—XXXIX. *The Historical portion of Isaiah.*

It occurred in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and

came that *they might hear*, and to endeavour to draw them off from trusting to Hezekiah, and to induce them to submit to Sennacherib, promising them abundance in the land to which he would take them, and urging the power of Sennacherib as a reason why they should yield, vs. 12—20. (vi.) To all this the embassy of Hezekiah said nothing, but returned, as they had been instructed, into the city, with deep expressions of sorrow and grief, vs. 21, 22.

1. *In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah.* Of his reign, B.C. 709. ¶ That Sennacherib, &c. Sennacherib was son and successor of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and began to reign A.M. 3290, or 714 before Christ, and reigned, according to Calmet, but four years, according to Prideaux, eight years, and according to Gesenius, eighteen years. The immediate occasion of this war against Judah was the fact that Hezekiah had shaken off the yoke of Assyria, by which his father Ahaz and the nation had suffered so much under Tiglath Pileser, or Shalmaneser. 2 Kings xviii. 7. To reduce Judea again to subjection, as well as to carry his conquests into Egypt, appears to have been the design of this celebrated expedition. He ravaged the country, took the strong towns and fortresses, and prepared then to lay siege to Jerusalem itself. Hezekiah, however, as soon as the army of Sennacherib had entered Judea, prepared to put Jerusalem into a state of complete defence. At the advice of his counsellors he stopped the waters that flowed in the neighbourhood of the city, and that might furnish refreshment to

fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defended cities of Judah, and took them.

a besieging army; built up the broken walls; inclosed one of the fountains within a wall, and prepared shields and darts in abundance to repel the invader. 2 Chron. xxxii. 2—5. Sennacherib, seeing that all hope of easily taking Jerusalem was taken away, apparently became inclined to hearken to terms of accommodation. Hezekiah sent to him to propose peace, and to ask the conditions on which he would withdraw his forces. He confessed his error in not paying the tribute stipulated by his father, and his willingness to pay now what should be demanded by Sennacherib. Sennacherib demanded three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold. This was paid by Hezekiah, by exhausting the treasury, and by stripping even the temple of its gold. 2 Kings xviii. 13—16. It was evidently understood in this treaty that Sennacherib was to withdraw his forces, and return to his own land. But this treaty he ultimately disregarded. See Note, ch. xxxiii. 8. He seems, however, to have granted Hezekiah some respite, and to have delayed his attack on Jerusalem until his return from Egypt. This war with Egypt he prosecuted at first with great success, and with a fair prospect of the conquest of that country. But having laid siege to Pelusium, and having spent much time before it without success, he was compelled at length to raise the siege, and to retreat. Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, having come to the aid of the reigning monarch of Egypt, Sevechus, and advancing to the relief of Pelusium, Sennacherib was compelled to raise the siege, and retreated to Judea. Here, having taken

2. And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem, unto king Hezekiah, with a great army: and he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field.
3. Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder.

! or, secretary.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

2. took them. And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem to king Hezekiah with a great army, and he halted at the aqueduct of the upper pool in the highway to the field of the fuller.
3. Then came forth to him Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, who was over the house, and Shebna, the scribe, and Joah, son of Asaph, the recorder.

Lachish, and disregarding his compact with Hezekiah, he sent an army to Jerusalem under Rabshakeh to lay siege to the city. This is the point in the history of Sennacherib to which the passage before us refers. See Prideaux' *Connexion*, vol. i. p. 138—141; Josephus *Ant. B. x. ch. i.*; Gesenius *in loco*, and Robinson's *Calmet*. ¶ *All the defended cities, &c.* All the towns on the way to Egypt, and in the vicinity of Jerusalem. See Notes on ch. x. 28—32.

2. *And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh.* In 2 Kings xviii. 17, it is said that he sent Tartan, and Rabsaris, and Rabshakeh. In regard to Tartan, see Note, ch. xx. 1. It is probable that Rabshakeh only is mentioned in Isaiah, because the expedition may have been mainly under his direction, or more probably because he was the principal speaker on the occasion to which he refers. ¶ *From Lachish.* This was a city in the south of the tribe of Judah, and was south-west of Jerusalem. Josh. x. 23, xv. 39. It was situated in a plain, and was the seat of an ancient Canaanitish king. It was rebuilt and fortified by Rehoboam, 2 Chron. xi. 9. It was in some respects a border town, and was a defence against the incursions of the Philistines. It was therefore situated between Jerusalem and Egypt, and was in the direct way of Sennacherib in his going to Egypt, and on his return. ¶ *With a great army.* Sennacherib remained himself for a time at

Lachish, though he followed not long after. It is probable that he sent forward a considerable portion of his immense army, retaining only so many forces as would constitute a sufficient guard for himself, or as he judged would be necessary to carry on the siege of Lachish. In 2 Chron. xxxii. 9, it is said that Sennacherib, while he sent his servants to Jerusalem, "laid siege to Lachish and all his power with him;" but this must mean that he retained with him a considerable part of his army, and doubtless all that contributed to his magnificence and splendor. The word "power" in 2 Chron. xxxii. 9, means also "dominion," (see the margin,) and denotes all the insignia of royalty; and this might have been retained while a considerable part of his forces had been sent forward to Jerusalem. ¶ *And he stood.* He halted; he encamped there; he intended to make that the point of attack. ¶ *By the conduit, &c.* See Note on ch. vii. 3.

3. *Then came forth unto him.* Isaiah has here omitted what is recorded in 2 Kings xviii. 18, that Rabshakeh and his companions "called to the king," and as the result of that, probably, Hezekiah sent out Eliakim, &c. ¶ *Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house.* Respecting Eliakim and his character, see Notes on ch. xxii. 20—25. ¶ *And Shebna the scribe.* On his character, see Note ch. xxii. 15. He is there said to have been "over the



4. And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?

5. I say, sayest thou, (but *they are but vain* <sup>1</sup> words) <sup>2</sup> *I have*

<sup>1</sup> *a word of lips.*

<sup>2</sup> *or, but counsel and strength are for the war.*

counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

6. Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

4. And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, what is this ground of confidence in  
5. which thou dost trust? "I say" thou sayest (but it is vain talk) "I have counsel and strength for war." Now, on whom dost thou trust,  
6. that thou rebellest against me? Lo! Thou trustest on the support of that broken reed Egypt, on which if a man lean it will pierce his hand and go through it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that

house," and it is stated that he should be degraded from that office and succeeded by Eliakim. It seems, however, that Hezekiah retained him as *scribe*, or as *secretary*. ¶ And Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder. The chronicler; the officer to whom was entrusted the keeping of the records of state. The Hebrew word means the remembrancer; him by whose means former events might be recalled and remembered, perhaps an officer such as would be called *historiographer*.

4. *What confidence, &c.* What is the ground of your confidence, on what do you trust. The appellation "great king" was the customary title of the kings of the Persians and Assyrians.

5. *I say, sayest thou.* In 2 Kings xviii. 20, this is "thou sayest;" and thus many MSS. read it here, and Lowth and Noyes have adopted that reading. So the Syriac read it. But the sense not affected, whichever reading is adopted. It is designed to show to Hezekiah that his reliance either on his own resources, or on Egypt was vain. ¶ But they are but *vain words*. Marg. as in the Heb., "a word of the lips;" that is, mere words; vain and empty boasting or reliance. ¶ On whom dost

thou trust. What resources have you; or on whom can you rely to justify your revolt from me. ¶ *That thou rebellest against me?* Hezekiah had revolted from the Assyrian power, and had refused to pay the tribute which had been imposed on the Jews in the time of Ahaz. 2 Kings xviii. 7.

6. *Lo, thou trustest, &c.* It is possible that Sennacherib might have been apprised of the attempt which had been made by the Jews to secure the co-operation of Egypt, (see Notes on ch. xxx. 1—7, xxxi. 1, seq.) though he might not have been aware that the negotiation was unsuccessful. ¶ *In the staff.* Or the support. ¶ *Of this broken reed.* The same comparison of Egypt with a broken reed, or a reed which broke while they were trusting to it, occurs in Ezek. xxix. 6, 7. *A reed or cane* was doubtless used often for staves as they are now. They are light and hollow, with long joints. The idea here is, that as a slender reed would break when a man leaned on it, and would pierce his hand, so it would be with Egypt. Their reliance would give way; and their trusting to Egypt would be attended with injury to themselves. Comp. ch. xxx. 5 7, xxxi. 3.

7. But if thou say to me, We trust in the LORD our God: *is it not he whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away,* <sup>b</sup> and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar?

<sup>b</sup> 2 Kings 18. 4.

NEW TRANSLATION.

7. trust in him. But if thou say unto me, "We trust in JEHOVAH our God," is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath removed, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Before this altar shall ye

7. *But if thou say to me.* If you shall make this plea that you believe JEHOVAH will protect you in your revolt. The word "thou" here refers to Hezekiah, or to the ambassadors speaking in his name. In 2 Kings xviii. 22, it is, "but if ye say unto me;" that is, you ambassadors. The sense is substantially the same. ¶ *Is it not he, &c.* This is given as a reason why they should not put their confidence in JEHOVAH. The reason is, that he supposed that Hezekiah had removed all the altars and places of worship of JEHOVAH from all parts of the land, and that they could not calculate on the protection of a God whose worship had been abolished. It is probable that Sennacherib and Rabshakeh had heard of the reformation which had been effected by Hezekiah, of his destroying the groves and altars which had been consecrated in the reign of his father to idolatry, and perhaps of the fact that he had even destroyed the brazen serpent which Moses had made, and which had become an object of idolatrous worship, (2 Kings xviii. 4,) and he may have supposed that all these altars and groves had been devoted to JEHOVAH, and connected with his worship. He did not seem to understand that all that Hezekiah had done was only to establish the worship of JEHOVAH in the land. ¶ *High places.* The worship of idols was usually performed in groves on high places or on the tops of hills and mountains. It seems to have been supposed that worship in such places was more acceptable to the Deity. Perhaps it may have been because they thus seemed nearer heaven, or the residence of the gods; perhaps, because there is

a sublimity and solemnity in such places; a stillness and elevation above the world which seem favourable to devotion. Whatever was the cause, such places were usually selected as places of idol worship. See 1 Sam. ix. 12; 1 Chron. xxi. 29; 1 Kings iii. 4; 2 Kings xii. 3. Chapels, temples, and altars were erected on such places, (1 Kings xiii. 32; 2 Kings xvii. 29;) and ministers and priests attended there to officiate, 1 Kings xii. 32; 2 Kings xvii. 32. Even the kings of Judah, notwithstanding the express prohibition of Moses (Deut. xii.) were engaged in such acts of worship, (2 Kings xii. 4, xiv. 4, xv. 4, 35; 2 Chron. xx. 33, xv. 17;) and Solomon himself sacrificed in chapels of this kind. 1 Kings iii. 2. These places Hezekiah had destroyed; that is, he had cut down the consecrated groves, and had destroyed the chapels and temples which had been erected there. The fact that Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, had been distinguished for worshipping in such places, had probably led the king of Assyria to suppose that this was the proper worship of the God of the Jews; and now that Hezekiah had destroyed them all, he seems to have inferred that he was guilty of gross irreligion, and could no longer depend on the protection of JEHOVAH. ¶ *And said to Judah and Jerusalem.* He had commanded them to worship only in Jerusalem, at the temple. This was in strict accordance with the law of Moses; but this seems to have been understood by Sennacherib as, in fact, almost or quite banishing the worship of JEHOVAH from the land. Probably this was said to alienate the minds of the people from Hezekiah, by showing them that

8. Now therefore give<sup>1</sup> pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand<sup>c</sup> horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.

9. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of

the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt<sup>d</sup> for chariots and for horsemen?

10. And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD<sup>e</sup> said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

<sup>1</sup> or, *hostages*.

<sup>c</sup> Ps. 20. 7, 8. Hos. 14. 3.

<sup>d</sup> Jer. 2. 36.

<sup>e</sup> ch. 37. 18. Amos 3. 6.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

8. worship? And now, I pray thee, enter into a wager with my lord the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses if thou  
9. canst on thy part provide riders for them. How then canst thou turn back one single commander of the least of the servants of my Lord?  
10. And dost thou trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? And now,

he had taken away their rights and privileges of worshipping God where they chose.

8. *Now therefore give pledges.* Marg. hostages. The Hebrew verb (עָרַב) means, properly, to mix or mingle; then to exchange commodities by barter or traffic; then to become surety for any one, to *exchange* with him, to stand in his place; then to pledge, to pledge one's life; or to give a pledge, or security of any kind. Here it is used in a spirit of *taunting* or *derision*, and is equivalent to what would be said among us, "I will bet you, or I will lay a wager, that if we should give you only two thousand horses, that you could not find men enough to ride them, or men that had knowledge of horsemanship enough to guide them." There was much severity in this taunt. The Jews hoped to defend themselves. Yet here was an immense army coming up to lay siege against them. What hope had they of defence, or resistance. So weak and feeble were they, that Rabshakeh said they could not furnish even two thousand horsemen to resist all the host of the Assyrians. There was, doubtless, much *truth* in this taunt. It was not permitted by the law of Moses for the Jews to keep cavalry, nor for their kings to multiply horses. The reason of this may be seen in the Notes on ch. ii. 7. Though some of the kings, and

especially Solomon, had disregarded this law of Moses, and had multiplied horses, yet Hezekiah had endeavoured to restore the pure worship of God, and the observance of the law, and it is probable, that he *had* no cavalry, and that the art of guiding the horse was little known in Jerusalem. As the Assyrians prided themselves on their cavalry, they consequently looked with contempt on a people who were destitute of this means of defence.

9. *How then wilt thou turn away the face.* How wilt thou resist, or oppose, if you have not even this means of defence? The most unimportant captain in the army of Assyria commands more horsemen than this, and how can you expect to oppose even him, much more how can you be able to resist all the mighty army of the Assyrian? ¶ *One captain of the least, &c.* The word "captain" here, מֵלָךְ, construct state from מֶלֶךְ, denotes a *prefect* or *governor* of a province less than a satrap, an officer who was under the satrap and subject to him. It is applied to an officer in the Assyrian empire, (2 Kings xviii. 24;) in the Chaldean empire, (Jer. li. 23;) the Persian, (Esth. viii. 9, ix. 3;) and to the prefects of Judea in the time of Solomon, 1 Kings x. 15. The word is of foreign origin.

10. *And am I now come up without the*

11. Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

am I come up without JEHOVAH against this land to destroy it? JEHOVAH hath said unto me, "Go up against this land, and destroy it."

11. Then said Eliakim, and Shebna, and Joah unto Rabshakeh; "Speak, we beseech thee, to thy servants in the Aramian language, for we understand it; and speak not unto us in the Jewish language, in the hearing

**LORD.** Am I come up without his permission or command? Rabshakeh here speaks in the name of his master; and he means to say that he had the express command of JEHOVAH to inflict punishment on the Jews. It is *possible* that there had been conveyed to Sennacherib a rumour of what Isaiah had said, (see ch. x. 5, 6,) that God would bring the Assyrians upon the Jewish people to punish them for their sins, and that Rabshakeh now pleads that as his authority, and to show them that resistance would be vain. Or it is possible that he uses the name JEHOVAH here as synonymous with the name of GOD; and means to say that he had been *divinely directed* to come up in that expedition. All the ancient warriors usually consulted the gods, and endeavored by auguries to obtain the divine approbation to their plans of conquest, and Rabshakeh may mean simply to say that his master came now under the divine sanction and direction. Or (which is more probable) he made use of this as a mere pretence for the purpose of influencing the people who heard him, and to whom he said he was sent, (ver. 12,) for the purpose of alienating their minds from Hezekiah, and to induce them to surrender. He knew that it was one of the *principles* of the Jews, however little they regarded it in practice, to yield to his authority. Wicked men will be glad to plead divine authority for their purposes and plans, when they can have the slightest pretence for it.

11. *Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language.* Heb.,

אַרַמִּי, *Aramian*. Aram, or Aramia, properly meaning a high region, or the *highlands*, was of wider extent than Syria proper, and comprehended not only Syria, but Mesopotamia. It usually denotes, however, Syria proper, of which the capital was Damascus. The language of all this country was probably the same—the Syrian or Aramian, a language of the same family as the Hebrew, and having a strong resemblance to that and to the Chaldee. This was not properly the language of *Assyria*, where, probably, a dialect composed of the language of the Medes and Persians was employed, perhaps generally the Persian tongue. But the Syriac language was spoken in different parts of Assyria. It was spoken in Mesopotamia, and doubtless in some of the provinces of the Assyrian empire, and might be presumed to be understood by Rabshakeh, and those with him. The Jews had intercourse with the Syrians, and those who had been sent out by Hezekiah had learned to speak that. It is not probable that they understood the Medio-Persian tongue that was spoken by the Assyrians usually. The Syriac, or Aramian was probably the most common language which was spoken in that region. Its knowledge prevailed in the time of the Saviour, and was that which he usually spoke. ¶ *In the Jews' language.* יְהוּדִית, the language of Judah. It is remarkable that they did not call it the *Hebrew* language. But there might have been some national pride in regard to this. The Hebrew language had

12. But Rabshakeh said, Hath <sup>he not sent me</sup> my master sent me to thy master that sit upon the wall, that they and to thee to speak these words? may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?

ſ Ps. 31. 18.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

12. of the people on the wall." And Rabshakeh said, "Hath my Lord sent me to thy Lord and thee, to speak these words? and not to the men that sit on the wall, yet destined to the necessity of eating their

been the common language of all the Jews, and had been spoken by those of the kingdom of Israel or Samaria, as well as by those of the kingdom of Judah. But after the revolt of the ten tribes, it is possible that they might have claimed the *language* as their own, and regarded the Hebrew—the venerable language of their fathers—as belonging to them peculiarly, as they claimed everything that was sacred or venerable in the nation, and hence they spoke of the language as the language of Judah. The name of Judah, or Jews, which is derived from Judah, was after the removal of the ten tribes given to the entire nation; a name which is retained to the present time. In Isa. xix. 18, it is called the language of Canaan. See note on that place. ¶ *In the ears of the people that are on the wall.* This conference took place, evidently, near the city, and within hearing distance. Doubtless the people of the city, feeling a deep curiosity to hear the message of the Assyrian, crowded the walls. The Jewish ambassadors were apprehensive that what was said by Rabshakeh would alienate their minds from Hezekiah, and requested that the conference might be conducted in a language which they could not understand.

12. *Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee.* To Hezekiah, and to you alone. A part of my purpose is to address the *people*, and to induce them to leave Hezekiah, and to offer no resistance to the Assyrian. ¶ *To the men that sit on the wall, &c.* The meaning of this is, that the inhabitants of the city, if they do not surrender, will be reduced to great straits, and subjected to the evils

of famine. If they did not surrender, it was the purpose of the Assyrian to lay siege to the city, and to reduce it. But it was often the work of years to reduce and take a city. Alexander spent three years before Tyre, and the Greeks employed ten in reducing ancient Troy. The sense here is, therefore, that unless the people could be induced to abandon Hezekiah, and surrender to Sennacherib, they would be subjected to all the horrors of a siege, when their provisions would be exhausted, and when they would be reduced to the most deplorable state of necessity and want. To avoid this, he calls on them to surrender; said that he was expressly sent to influence their minds; and presented the case in as appalling a view as possible, that he might induce them to forsake Hezekiah, and yield themselves into his hands. The idea in the whole verse is clearly expressed in the parallel place in 2 Chron. xxxii. 11. "Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst, saying, The Lord our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria?" In regard to the indelicacy of this passage we may observe (1.) that the Masorites in the Hebrew text have so *pointed* the words used, that in reading it the indelicacy would be considerably avoided. By this mode of pointing which now exists in the Hebrew text, words less offensive would be used in reading it, than those which were originally used. It is common in the Hebrew Scriptures when a word is used in the text that is indelicate, to place another word in the margin, and the system of vowel points that belong to the word in the margin is applied to the word in the text,

13. Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with <sup>s</sup> a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words of the <sup>h</sup> great king,

<sup>g</sup> Ps. 17. 10—13.

<sup>h</sup> Ps. 82. 6, 7. Dan. 4. 37.

the king of Assyria:

14. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

13. own excrements, and of drinking their own urine with you? Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jewish language, and said, "Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria."  
14. Thus saith the king, "Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall

and the word in the margin is thus commonly read. In accordance with this custom among the Jews, it is evident that more delicacy might have been observed by our translators in this, and in some other places of the Scriptures. (2.) The customs, habits, and modes of expression of people in different nations and times, differ. What appears indelicate at one time, or in one country, may not only be tolerated, but common in another. Many things are esteemed indelicate among us which are not so in polite and refined France; many expressions are so now which were not in the time when the Bible was translated into English. Many things may be to us offensive which were not so to the Syrians, the Babylonians, and the Jews; and many modes of expression which are common now, and consistent with all our notions of refinement, may appear improper in some other period. There are many things in Shakspeare, and in most of the old English writers, which cannot now be read without a blush. Yet need I say that those expressions will be heard with unconcern in the theatre by those whose delicacy is most offended by some expression in the Bible? There are things infinitely more offensive to delicacy in Byron, and Moore, and even Burns, than there are in the Scriptures; and yet are these not read without complaint or murmur by those who make the loudest complaints of the slightest departure from delicacy in the Bible? (3.) There is another remark to be made in regard to this. Isaiah is not at all responsible for the indelicacy of the

language here. He is simply an historian. He did not *say* it; nor is he responsible for it. If there is indelicacy in it, it is not in *recording* it, but in *saying* it; and the responsibility is on Rabshakeh. If Isaiah undertook to make a record of an important transaction, what right had he to abridge it, or contract it, or to make it different from what it was? (4.) And again. It was of importance to give the *true character* of the attack which was made on Jerusalem. The coming of Sennacherib was attended with pride, and insolence, and blasphemy; and it was important to state the true character of the transaction, and to record *just what was said and done*. Hence, Isaiah as a faithful historian, recorded the coming of the Assyrians; the expressions of their haughtiness, insolence, and pride; their vain-boasting, and their reproaches of JEHOVAH; and for the same reason he has recorded the gross and indelicate language which they used to add to the trials of the Jews. Let him who *used* the language, and not him who *recorded* it, bear the blame.

13. *Then Rabshakeh stood.* Indicating the posture of a man who intends to speak to them at a distance. ¶ *And cried with a loud voice.* So that those on the wall could hear. ¶ *The words of the king, &c.* Note, ver. 4.

14. *Let not Hezekiah deceive you.* By inducing you to put your trust in JEHOVAH or in himself, or with promises that you will be safe, and will be delivered. ¶ *Not be able to deliver you.* In 2 Kings xviii. 29, it is added, "out

15. Neither <sup>1</sup> let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

16. Hearken not to Hezekiah:

<sup>1</sup> Ps. 71. 10, 11.

for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make <sup>1</sup> *an agreement* with me *by* a present, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine,<sup>2</sup> and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern;

<sup>1</sup> with me a blessing, or, seek my favour by a present. <sup>2</sup> Zech. 3. 10.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

15. not be able to deliver you." And let not Hezekiah persuade you to trust in JEHOVAH, saying, "JEHOVAH will surely deliver us. This city shall not be given up into the hand of the king of Assyria."  
16. Hearken not to Hezekiah; for thus saith the king of Assyria: Make peace with me, and come out unto me, and eat ye every one of his own vine, and every one of his own fig-tree, and drink ye every one of the

of his hand;" but the sense is substantially the same.

15. *Make you trust in the LORD, &c.* Rabshakeh knew that Hezekiah was professedly devoted to JEHOVAH, and that he would endeavor to induce the people to trust in him. The Jews had now no other refuge but God, and as long as they put their confidence there, even Rabshakeh knew that it was hazardous to attempt to take and destroy their city. It was his policy, therefore, first to endeavor to undermine their reliance on God, before he could have any hope of success. The enemies of God's people cannot succeed in their designs against them until they can unsettle their confidence in Him.

16. *Hearken not to Hezekiah.* Do not listen to his entreaties to confide in him, and in JEHOVAH; do not unite with him in endeavoring to make any resistance or opposition to us. ¶ *Make an agreement with me by a present.* The LXX read this, *Εἰ βούλεσθε εὐλογηθῆναι*, "If you wish to be blessed, or happy, come out to me." The Hebrew is, literally, "Make with me a blessing,"

the idea of its being done "by a present" is not implied in the Hebrew text. The word "blessing" here probably means the same as *peace*. "Make peace with me," perhaps because peace was regarded as a blessing—as the

main source of blessing to them; and perhaps the word is used with a reference to one of the significations of קָנָה, which is to *kneel down*, and this word may refer to their *kneeling down*; that is, to their offering allegiance to the king of Assyria. The former is, however, the more probable sense, that the word means a peace, because this was an evident blessing, or would be the source of all rich blessings to them. It is not, however, used in this sense elsewhere in the Bible. The Chaldee renders it, "make peace, *קִנְיָה*, with me." ¶ *And come out to me.* Surrender yourselves to me. It is evident, however, that he did not mean that he would then remove them from their city and country, but he demanded a surrender, intending to come and remove them at some other period, ver. 17. ¶ *And eat ye every one of his vine, &c.* An emblem of safety, when every man might be permitted to partake of the fruit of his own labor. All that he now professed to desire was, that they should surrender the city, and give up their means of defence, and then he would leave them in security and quietness, until it should please his master to come and remove them to a land as fertile as their own. ¶ *And drink ye every one, &c.* Another emblem of security and happiness. This promise

17. Until <sup>1</sup> I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

18. *Beware* lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. <sup>m</sup> Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings 18. 32.

<sup>m</sup> Dan. 3. 15.

land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

19. Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out <sup>n</sup> of my hand?

<sup>n</sup> 2 Kings 18. 10.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

17. waters of his own cistern, until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and of vine-  
 18. yards. Let not Hezekiah persuade you, saying, "JEHOVAH will deliver us." Have the gods of the nations delivered every one his land out of the  
 19. hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and of Arphad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? And have they delivered

was made to induce them to surrender. On the one hand, he threatened them with the dreadful evils of famine if they refused and allowed their city to be besieged (ver. 12); and on the other, he promised them, for a time at least, a quiet and secure residence in their own city, and then a removal to a land not inferior to their own.

17. *Until I come.* These are the words of the king of Assyria, delivered by Rabshakeh. It was proposed that they should remain safely in Jerusalem until Sennacherib should himself come and remove them to his own land. He was now engaged in the siege of Lachish (ver. 2), and it is probable that he purposed to take some other of the unsubdued towns in that part of Palestine. ¶ *And take you away.* It was common for conquerors in ancient times to remove a vanquished people from their own country. They did this either by sending them forth in colonies to people some unsettled region, or by removing the body of them to the land of the conqueror. This was done for various purposes. It was sometimes to make slaves of them; sometimes for the purposes of triumph; but more commonly to secure them from revolt. In this manner the ten tribes were removed from the kingdom of Samaria; and thus also the Jews were carried to

Babylon. Suetonius says that it was practised by the Romans. Thus he says (ch. xxi.) of Augustus that he removed the Suevi, and the Sicambri into Gaul, and stationed them on the Rhine. The same thing was also practised in Egypt for the purpose of securing the people from revolt. Gen. xlvii. 21. ¶ *A land like your own land.* A fertile land, abounding in the same productions as your own. ¶ *And wine.* Palestine was celebrated for the vine. The idea is, that in the land to which he would remove them, they should not want.

18. *Hath any of the gods of the nations, &c.* This is said to show them the impossibility, as he supposed, that they should be delivered from the arm of the king of Assyria. He had conquered all before him, and not even the gods of the nations had been able to rescue the lands where they were worshipped from the hands of the victorious invader. He *inferred*, therefore that JEHOVAH, the God of Palestine, could not save their land.

19. *Where are the gods of Hamath, &c.* In regard to these places, see Notes on ch. x. 9—11. ¶ *Where are the gods of Sepharvaim?* Sepharvaim was probably in Mesopotamia. Ptolemy mentions a city then of the name of *Sipphara* as the most southern city of



20. Who *are they* among all the gods ° of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

21. But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, say-

o ch 37. 18, 19. 45. 16, 17.

ing, Answer him not. <sup>p</sup>

22. Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

p Prov. 26. 4.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

20. Samaria from my hand? Who are they among all the gods of these lands that have delivered their land from my hand, that JEHOVAH should  
 21. deliver Jerusalem from my hand? But they held their peace, and answered him not a word; for the king's command was, "Answer him  
 22. not." Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and reported the words of Rabshakeh.

Mesopotamia, which is probably the same. It is evident that it was in the vicinity of Hamath and Arphad, and these are known to have been in Mesopotamia. When Shalmaneser carried Israel away captive from Samaria, he sent colonies of people into Palestine in their stead, among whom were the Sepharvaim. 2 Kings xvii. 24, 31. ¶ *And have they delivered Samaria, &c.* Note, ch. x. 11. The author of the Books of Chronicles expresses this in a more summary manner, and says that Rabshakeh joined JEHOVAH with the gods of the nations in the same language of reproach: "And he spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth, which were the work of the hands of men." 2 Chron. xxxii. 19.

21. *But they held their peace.* Hezekiah had commanded them not to answer. They were simply to *hear* what Rabshakeh had to propose, and to report to him, that he might decide on what course to pursue. It was a case also in which it was every way proper that they should be silent. There was so much insolence, self-confidence, blasphemy; the proposals were so degrading, and the claims were so arrogant, that it was not proper that they should

enter into conference, or listen a moment to the terms proposed. Their minds also were so horror-stricken with the language of insolence and blasphemy, and their hearts so pained by the circumstances of the city, that they would not feel disposed to reply to him. There *are* circumstances when it is proper to maintain a profound silence in the presence of revilers and blasphemers, and when we should withdraw from them, and go and spread the case before the LORD. This was done here (ch. xxxvii. 1), and the result showed that this was the course of wisdom.

22. *With their clothes rent.* This was a common mark of grief among the Jews. See 2 Sam. iii. 31; 1 Kings xxi. 27; Jer. xxxvi. 24; Ezra ix. 3; Job i. 20, ii. 12, and my Notes on Matt. xxvi. 65; Acts xiv. 14. The *causes* of their griefs were the insolence and arrogance of Rabshakeh; the proposal to surrender the city; the threatening of the siege on the one hand, and of the removal on the other, and the blasphemy of the name of their God, and the reproach of the king. All these things filled their hearts with grief; and they hastened to make report to Hezekiah.

1. And <sup>a</sup> it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard <sup>it</sup>, that he rent <sup>b</sup> his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went <sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 2 Kings 19. 1, &c.

<sup>c</sup> ver. 14.

<sup>b</sup> Job 1. 20.

into the house of the Lord.

2. And he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with <sup>d</sup> sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.

<sup>d</sup> Joel 1. 13.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

1. And when king Hezekiah heard it, he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of JEHOVAH. And he sent Eliakim, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and the old men of the priests, covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet, the

#### CHAPTER XXXVII.

##### ANALYSIS.

This chapter contains a continuation of the historical narrative commenced in the previous chapter. Hezekiah went with expressions of grief to the temple, to spread the cause of his distress before the Lord, ver. 1. He sent an embassy to Isaiah to ask his counsel, and his prayer in the time of the general distress, vs. 2—5. Isaiah replied that he should not be afraid of the Assyrian, for that he should soon be destroyed, vs. 6, 7. The return of Rabshakeh to Sennacherib, ver. 8. Sennacherib heard that Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, was preparing to make war upon him, and sent another embassy, with substantially the same message as the former, to induce him to surrender, vs. 9—13. Hezekiah, having read the letter which he sent, went again to the temple, and spread it before the Lord, ver. 14. His prayer is recorded, vs. 15—20. Isaiah, in answer to his prayer, reproves the pride and arrogance of Sennacherib, and gives the assurance that Jerusalem shall be safe, and that the Assyrian shall be destroyed, vs. 21—35. The chapter closes with an account of the destruction of the army of the Assyrians, and the death of Sennacherib, vs. 36—38.

1. When king Hezekiah heard it. Heard the account of the words of Rabshakeh,

ch. xxxvi. 22. ¶ *That he rent his clothes.* Note, ch. xxxvi. 22. ¶ *He covered himself with sackcloth.* See Note, ch. iii. 24. ¶ *And went into the house of the Lord.* Went up to the temple, to spread out the case before JEHOVAH (ver. 14). This was in accordance with the usual habit of Hezekiah; and it teaches us that when we are environed with difficulties or danger, and when we are reproached, and the name of our God is blasphemed, we should go and spread out our feelings before God, and seek his aid.

2. And he sent Eliakim, &c. Note, ch. xxxvi. 3. ¶ *And the elders of the priests.* It was a case of deep importance, and one that pertained in a special measure to the interests of religion; and he therefore selected the most respectable embassy that he could to present the case to the prophet. ¶ *Covered with sackcloth.* Religion had been insulted. The God whom the priests served had been blasphemed, and the very temple was threatened; and it was proper that the *priests* should go with the habiliments of mourning. ¶ *Unto Isaiah, &c.* It was customary on occasions of danger to consult prophets, as those who had direct communication with God, and seek direction from them. Thus Balak sent messengers to Balaam to consult him in a time of perplexity (Num. xxii. 5, seq.); thus Jehoshaphat and the king of Israel consulted Micaiah in time of danger

3. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of <sup>c</sup> trouble, and of rebuke,<sup>f</sup> and of <sup>i</sup> blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and *there* <sup>s</sup> is not strength to bring forth.

4. It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh,

*e* Ps. 50. 15. *f* ch. 25. 8. *Rev.* 3. 19.  
<sup>1</sup> or, provocation. *g* ch. 66. 9.

whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach <sup>h</sup> the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up *thy* prayer for the <sup>i</sup> remnant that is <sup>2</sup> left.

5. So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

*h* ver. 23, 24. *ch.* 51. 7, 8. *†* Rom. 9. 27.  
<sup>2</sup> found

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

3. son of Amoz. And they said unto him; Thus saith Hezekiah, "This is a day of trouble, of chastisement, and of contumely; for the children
4. are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. Perhaps JEHOVAH will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his lord hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which JEHOVAH thy God hath heard, wherefore, offer thy prayer for the
5. remnant that is yet left. So the servants of king Hezekiah came to

from Syria (1 Kings xxii. 1—13); thus Ahaziah, when sick, sent to consult Elijah (2 Kings i. 1—9); and thus Josiah sent an embassy to Huldah the prophetess to inquire in regard to the book which was found in the temple of the Lord, 2 Kings xxii. 14.

3. *This day is a day of rebuke.* This may refer either to the reproaches of Rabshakeh, or more probably to the fact that Hezekiah regarded the LORD as *rebuking* his people for their sins. The word which is here used, רִבְקָה, means, more properly, *chastisement* or *punishment*, Ps. cxlix. 7; Hos. v. 9. ¶ *And of blasphemy.* Marg., "or provocation." The word here used, נִפְתָּח, means, properly, *reproach* or *contumely*; and the sense is, that God and his cause had been vilified by Rabshakeh, and it was proper to appeal to him to vindicate the honor of his own name, ver. 4. ¶ *For the children are come, &c.* The meaning of this figure is plain. There was the highest danger, and need of aid. It was as in childbirth in which the pains had been protracted, the strength exhausted, and the powers of nature failed, and there was most imminent danger in regard to the mother and the child. So Hezekiah said there

was the most imminent danger in the city of Jerusalem. They had made all possible preparations for defence. And now, in the most critical time, they felt their energies exhausted, their strength insufficient for their defence, and needed the interposition of God.

4. *It may be the LORD thy God.* The God whom thou dost serve, and in whose name and by whose authority thou dost exercise the prophetic office. ¶ *Will hear the words, &c.* Will come forth and vindicate himself in regard to the language of reproach and blasphemy which has been used. See a similar use of the word "hear" in Ex. ii. 24, iii. 7. ¶ *To reproach the living God.* The revilings of Rabshakeh were really directed against the true God. The reproach of the "living God" consisted in his comparing him to idols, and saying that he was no more able to defend Jerusalem than the idol gods had been able to defend their lands. See Note, ch. xxxvi. 20. The phrase "the living God" is often applied to JEHOVAH in contradistinction from idols, which were dead, and which were mere blocks of wood or stone. ¶ *For the remnant that is left.* For those who survive, or probably for those parts of the land, including Jerusalem, that have not

6. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid <sup>k</sup> of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

7. Behold, I will <sup>l</sup> send a blast upon him; and he shall hear a

<sup>k</sup> ch. 43. 1, 2. 51. 12, 13.

<sup>l</sup> or, put a spirit into him, 1 Kings 22. 23.

rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

8. So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: <sup>1</sup> for he had heard that he was departed from <sup>m</sup> Lachish.

<sup>1</sup> Num. 33. 20, 21. Josh. 21. 13. 2 Ch. 21. 10.

<sup>m</sup> Josh. 10. 31—34.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

6. Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your Lord, "Thus saith **JEHOVAH**, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

7. Behold, I will put a spirit within him so that he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

8. And Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria besieging

fallen into the hands of the Assyrian. Sennacherib had taken many towns, but there were many also that had not yet been subdued by him.

6. *Unto your master.* Heb., to your lord. ¶ *Wherewith the servants, &c.* Heb., the youth, or the young men, (נָעָרִים). The word properly denotes boys, youths, young men; and is used here probably by way of disparagement, in contradistinction from an embassy that would be truly respectable, made up of aged men. ¶ *Have blasphemed me.* God regarded these words as spoken against himself; and he would vindicate his own honor and name.

7. *Behold, I will send a blast upon him.* Marg., "put a spirit into him." The word rendered "blast," רֵיחַ, is commonly rendered spirit. It may denote breath, or air, or soul, or spirit. There is no reason to think that the word is here used in the sense of blast or wind, as our translators seem to have supposed. The sense is, probably, "I will infuse into him a spirit of fear, by which he shall be alarmed by the rumour which he shall hear, and return to his own land." The word is often used in this sense. Comp. 1 Sam. xvi.

14. See also Isa. xxxi. 8, 9. Gesenius understands it here in the sense of will or disposition. "I will change his will or disposition, so that he will return to his own land." ¶ *And he shall hear a rumour.* The rumour or report here referred to, was doubtless that respecting Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, ver. 9. It was this which would alarm him, and drive him in haste from the cities which he was now besieging, and be the means of expelling him from the land. ¶ *And I will cause him, &c.* This is said in accordance with the usual statements in the Scriptures, that all events are under God's providential control. Comp. Note on ch. x. 5, 6. ¶ *By the sword in his own land.* See Note on ver. 38.

8. *So Rabshakeh returned.* Returned from Jerusalem to the camp of his master. He had received no answer to his insulting message (ch. xxxvi. 21); he saw there was no prospect that the city would surrender; and he therefore returned again to the camp. ¶ *And found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah.* He had departed from Lachish. Why he had done this is unknown. It is possible that he had taken it, though this is not recorded anywhere in history. Or it is possible that he had found it

9. And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee: and when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,

10. Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

9. Libnah, for he had heard that he had decamped from Lachish. And he heard it said respecting Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "He is coming forth to make war with thee." And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, and said, "Thus shall ye say to Hezekiah, the king of Judah, Let not thy God in whom thou dost confide deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.

impracticable to subdue it as speedily as he had desired, and had withdrawn from it for the purpose of subduing other places that would offer a more feeble resistance. Libnah was a city in the south of Judah (Josh. xv. 42), given to the priests, and declared a city of refuge. 1 Chron. vi. 54, 57. Eusebius and Jerome say it was in the district of Eleutheropolis. *Calmét*. It was about ten miles to the north-west of Lachish. This city was taken by Joshua, and all its inhabitants put to the sword. After taking this, Joshua next assaulted and took Lachish. Josh. x. 29—32.

9. *And he heard say.* The report, or rumour, referred to in ver. 7. In what way he heard this is not intimated. It is probable that the preparations which Tirhakah had made were well known to the surrounding regions, and that he was already on his march against Sennacherib. ¶ *Tirhakah*. This king, who by Eusebius and by most ancient writers is called *Tarakhōs*, *Tarakos*, was a celebrated conqueror, and had subdued Egypt to himself. He reigned over Egypt eighteen years. When Sennacherib marched into Egypt, Sevechus, or Sethon, was on the throne. Sennacherib having laid siege to Pelusium, Tirhakah came to the aid of the city, and in consequence of his aid, Sennacherib was compelled to raise the siege, and returned to Palestine, and laid siege to Lachish. Tirhakah succeeded Sevechus in Egypt, and was the third

and last of the Ethiopian kings that reigned over that country. He probably took advantage of the distracted state that succeeded the death of Sevechus, and secured the crown for himself. This was, however, after the death of Sennacherib. The capital which he occupied was Thebes. See Prideaux's *Connexion*, vol. i. pp. 141, 145, 149, Ed. 1815. As he was celebrated as a conqueror, and as he had driven Sennacherib from Pelusium and from Egypt, we may see the cause of the alarm of Sennacherib when it was rumoured that he was about to follow him into Palestine, and to make war on him there. ¶ *He is come forth.* He is on his march; he has made preparations, and is on his way. ¶ *He sent messengers*, &c. With letters or dispatches, ver. 14. Hezekiah was probably ignorant of the approach of Tirhakah, or, at all events, Sennacherib would suppose that he was ignorant of it; and as Sennacherib knew that there would be no hope that Hezekiah would yield if he knew that Tirhakah was approaching to make war on him, he seems to have resolved to anticipate the intelligence, and to see if it were possible to induce Hezekiah to surrender. He therefore sent substantially the same message as before; and summoned him to capitulate.

10. *Let not thy God deceive thee.* The similar message which had been sent by Rabshakeh (ch. xxxvi. 14, 15), had

11. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done <sup>a</sup> to all lands, by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?

12. Have the gods of the na-

<sup>a</sup> ch. 14. 17.

tions delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan,<sup>o</sup> and Haran,<sup>p</sup> and Rezeph, and the children of Eden <sup>q</sup> which were in Telassar?

<sup>o</sup> 2 Kings 17. 6. 18. 11.

<sup>p</sup> Gen. 12. 4. 28. 10.

<sup>q</sup> Amos 1. 5.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

31. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, how they have utterly destroyed them. And shalt thou be delivered?  
12. Have the gods of the nations which my fathers destroyed delivered them? Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which

been sent mainly to the people to induce them not to put confidence in Hezekiah, as if he would deceive them by inducing them to rely on the aid of JEHOVAH. As that had failed, and no answer had been returned, he, as a last resort, sent a similar message to Hezekiah himself, designed to alienate his mind from God, and assuring him that resistance would be vain. To convince him, he referred him (ver. 11—13) to the conquests of the Assyrians, and assured him that it would be impossible to resist a nation that had subdued so many nations. He had it not in his power to add Egypt to the list of subdued kingdoms, or it would have been done.

11. *And shalt thou be delivered?* How will it be possible for you to resist these arms, and stand out against the conquerors of the world?

12. *My fathers.* My predecessors on the throne. ¶ *Gozan.* This was a region or country in the northern part of Mesopotamia, and on the river Chaboras. There was a river of the name Gozan in Media, which ran through the province and gave it its name. The river fell probably into the Chaboras. This region is known to have been under the dominion of Assyria, for Salmaneser, when he had subdued the ten tribes, carried them away beyond the Euphrates to a country bordering on the river Gozan. 2 Kings xvii. 6. Or, according to Gesenius, the river which is referred to is the Chaboras itself. He translates the passage in 2

Kings xvii. 6 thus, "And placed them in Chaleitis (Halab), and on the Chabor (Habor), a river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." According to this, the river was the Chaboras, the Chabor of Ezekiel, and the region was situated on the Chaboras. This river falls into the Euphrates from the East. Ptolemy calls the region lying between the Chaboras and Laocoras, by the name of *Gauzanitis*, which is doubtless the same as the Hebrew *Gozan*. Gozan is usually mentioned in connexion with cities of Mesopotamia. 1 Chron. v. 26; 2 Kings xix. 12. ¶ *And Haran.* This was a city of Mesopotamia, to which Abraham went after he left Ur of the Chaldees. His father died here; and from this place he was called to go into the land of promise. Gen. xi. 31, 32. Comp. Note, Acts vii. 4. It is now called *Harran*, and is situated in 36° 52' N. Lat., and 39° 5' E. Long., in a flat and sandy plain, and is only peopled by a few wandering Arabs, who select it as the place of residence on account of the delicious waters it contains. It belonged by conquest to the Assyrian empire. ¶ *And Rezeph.* According to Abulfeda there were many towns of this name. One, however, was more celebrated than the others, and is probably the one here referred to. It was situated about a day's journey west of the Euphrates, and is mentioned by Ptolemy by the name of Πρσαφα, *Resapha*. ¶ *And the children of Eden.* Eden was evidently a country well known in the

13. Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?

14. And Hezekiah received the

ch. 36. 19. Jer. 49. 23.

letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

ver. 1. Joel 2. 17—20.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

13. were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Henah, and of Ivah?"

14. And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it. And he went up to the house of JEHOVAH, and spread it

time of Isaiah, and was doubtless the tract *within* which man was placed when he was created. The garden, or Paradise, was *in* Eden, and was not properly itself called Eden. Gen. ii. 8. It is probable that Eden was a region or tract of country of considerable extent. Its situation has been a subject of anxious inquiry. It is not proper here to go into an examination of this subject. It is evident from the passage before us, that it was either in Mesopotamia, or in the neighbourhood of that country, since it is mentioned in connexion with cities and towns of that country. It is mentioned by Amos (B. C. 787) as a country then well known, and as a part of Syria, not far from Damascus.

I will break also the bar of Damascus  
And cut off the inhabitant from the plain of  
Aven,  
And him that holdeth the sceptre from the  
house of EDEN  
And the people of Syria shall go into captivity  
to Kir,  
Saith the Lord.

Amos i. 5.

In Isa. li. 3, Eden is referred to as a country well known, and as distinguished for its fertility.

For JEHOVAH shall comfort Zion;  
He will comfort all her waste places,  
And he will make her wilderness like Eden,  
And her desert like the gardens of JEHOVAH.

Thus, also, in Ezek. xxvii. 23, we find Eden mentioned in connexion with Haran and Canneh. Canneh was probably the same as Calneh (Gen. x. 10), the Calno of Isaiah (Isa. x. 9), and was doubtless situated in Mesopotamia, since it is joined with cities that are known to have been there. Comp. also Ezek.

xxxi. 9, 16, 18. All these passages demonstrate that there was such a country, and prove also that it was either in Mesopotamia, or in a country adjacent to Mesopotamia. It is not, however, possible now to designate its exact boundaries. ¶ *In Telassar?* This place is nowhere else mentioned in the Scriptures. Nothing, therefore, is known of its situation. The connexion demands that it should be in Mesopotamia. The names of ancient places were so often lost or changed, that it is often impossible to fix their exact locality.

13. *The king of Hamath.* Note, ch. xxxvi. 19. ¶ *Henah, and Ivah?* The situation of these places is not certainly known. Hena is mentioned in 2 Kings xviii. 34; xix. 13. It was evidently in Mesopotamia, and was probably the same which was afterwards called *Ana*, situated near a ford of the Euphrates. The situation of *Ivah* is not certainly known. It was under the Assyrian dominion, and was one of the places from which colonists were brought to Samaria. 2 Kings xvii. 24, 31. Michaelis supposes that it was between Berytus and Tripoli, but was under the dominion of the Assyrians.

14. *And Hezekiah received the letter.* Heb., *letters*, in the plural. It is not mentioned in the account of the embassy (ver. 9) that he sent a letter, but it is not probable that he would send an embassy to a monarch without a written document. ¶ *Went up into the house of the LORD.* The temple, ver. 1. ¶ *And spread it before the LORD.* Perhaps unrolled the document there, and

15. And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying,

16. O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest <sup>t</sup> *between* the cherubims, thou <sup>u</sup> *art* the God, *even* thou <sup>x</sup> *alone*, of all the king-

<sup>t</sup> Ex. 25. 22. Ps. 80. 1. 99. 1.  
<sup>u</sup> ch. 43. 10, 11. <sup>x</sup> Ps. 86. 10.

doms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.

17. Incline <sup>v</sup> thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, <sup>z</sup> O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God.

<sup>v</sup> Dan. 9. 18. <sup>z</sup> Job 36. 7.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

15. before JEHOVAH. And Hezekiah prayed unto JEHOVAH, saying,

16. "O JEHOVAH of hosts, God of Israel, who art seated between the cherubim, Thou alone art God to all the kingdoms of the earth! Thou

17. "hast made heaven and earth! Incline, O JEHOVAH, thine ear and "hear; open, O JEHOVAH, thine eyes and see, and hear all the words of

spread it out; or perhaps it means simply that he spread out the contents of the letter; that is, made mention of it in his prayer. Hezekiah had no other resource. He was a man of God; and in his trouble he looked to God for aid. He therefore, before he formed any plan, went up to the temple, and laid his case before God. What an example for all monarchs and rulers! And what an example for all the people of God in times of perplexity!

16. O LORD of hosts. Note, ch. i. 9. JEHOVAH commanding and directing all the hosts of war; all the mighty powers in the universe, in heaven and on earth. He had, therefore, power to defend him from the mighty hosts which were coming against him. ¶ *That dwellest between the cherubims.* On the cherubim, see Note on ch. xiv. 13. The reference here is, doubtless, to the fact that the symbol of the divine presence in the temple—the Shechinah (from שָׁכַן, *Shākhān*, to dwell, to inhabit; so called because it was the symbol of God's dwelling with his people, or inhabiting the temple)—rested on the cover of the ark in the temple. Hence God is frequently represented as dwelling between the cherubim. Ex. xxv. 22; Ps. lxxx. 1; xcix. 1. On the whole subject of the cherubim, the reader may consult an article prepared by me in the Quarterly Christian Spectator for September, 1836. ¶ *Thou art the God.*

The only God, ch. xliii. 10, 11. ¶ *Even thou alone.* There is none besides thee—a truth which is often affirmed in the Scriptures. Ps. lxxxvi. 10; Deut. xxxii. 39; 1 Cor. viii. 4. ¶ *Of all the kingdoms of the earth.* Thou hast power, therefore, to control all their armies. ¶ *Thou hast made heaven and earth.* It was on the ground of this power and universal dominion that Hezekiah pleaded that God would interpose.

17. Incline thine ear, &c. This is evidently language taken from what occurs among men. When they are desirous of hearing distinctly, they incline the ear, or apply it close to the speaker. Similar language is not unfrequently used in the Scriptures as applicable to God. 2 Kings xix. 16; Ps. lxxxvi. 1; xxxi. 2; xvii. 6; lxxi. 2; lxxxviii. 2; Dan. ix. 18. ¶ *Open thine eyes.* This is similar language applied to God, derived from the fact that when we wish to see an object, the eyes are fixed wide open upon it. Comp. Job xiv. 3; xxvii. 19. ¶ *And hear all the words, &c.* That is, attend to their words, and inflict suitable punishment. This was the burden of the prayer of Hezekiah, that God would vindicate his own honor, and save his name from reproach. ¶ *Which he hath sent.* In the letters which he had sent to Hezekiah, as well as the words which he had sent to the people by Rabshakeh, ch. xxxvi. 18—20. ¶ *To reproach the living God.* Note, ver. 4.



18. *Of a truth*, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the <sup>1</sup> nations, and their countries,

19. And have <sup>2</sup> cast their gods into the fire: for they *were* no

<sup>1</sup> lands.

<sup>2</sup> given.

gods, but <sup>a</sup> the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

20. Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand,

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 115. 4, &c. ch. 40. 19, 20. 41. 7. 44. 9, &c.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

18. "Sennacherib which he hath sent to reproach the living God. In truth, "O JEHOVAH, the kings of Assyria have desolated all the nations and  
19. "their lands, and have cast all their gods into the fire: for they were "not gods, but the work of the hands of men, wood and stone; therefore  
20. "they have destroyed them. And now, O JEHOVAH our God, do thou "save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know "that thou alone art JEHOVAH."

18. *Of a truth.* It is as he had said, that all the nations have been subjected to the arms of the Assyrian. He now intends to add Jerusalem to the number of vanquished cities and kingdoms, and to boast that he has subdued the nation under the protection of JEHOVAH, as he had done the nations under the protection of idol gods. He designs, therefore, to boast that JEHOVAH is unable to resist the mighty arms of the king of Assyria, and that the true God is as weak and powerless as the gods of wood and stone. ¶ *Have laid waste all the nations.* Heb., as in the margin, *all the lands*. But this is evidently an elliptical form of expression, meaning all the inhabitants or people of the lands, or all the nations. In 2 Kings xix. 17, it is thus expressed, "The kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands."

19. *And have cast their gods into the fire.* This appears to have been the usual policy of the Assyrians and the Babylonians. It was contrary to the policy which the Romans afterwards pursued, for the Romans admitted the gods of other nations among their own, and even allowed them to have a place in the Pantheon. Their design seems not to have been to outrage and alienate the feelings of the vanquished, but to conciliate them, and to make them feel that they were a part of the same people. They supposed that a vanquished people would be conciliated

with the idea that their gods were admitted to participate in the honors of the gods worshipped by the conquerors of the world. But the policy of the Eastern conquerors was different. They began usually by removing the people themselves whom they had subdued, to another land, Note, ch. xxxvi. 17. They thus intended to alienate their minds as much as possible from their own country. They laid everything waste by fire and sword, and thus destroyed their homes, and all the objects of their attachment. They destroyed their temples, their graves, and their household gods. They well knew that the civil policy of the nations was founded in religion, and that to subdue them effectually, it was necessary to root out and abolish their religion. They therefore committed their idols to the flames, and intended to bring the people into entire and perfect subjection to their conquerors. Which was the wisest policy may indeed admit of question. Perhaps in each case the policy was well adapted to the particular end which was had in view. ¶ *For they were no gods.* They were not truly gods, and therefore they had no power of resistance, and it was easy to destroy them.

20. *That all the kingdoms of the earth may know, &c.* Since he has been able to subdue all others; since the gods of the nations were not able to offer resistance; and since Judea alone, the

that all the kingdoms of the earth may know <sup>b</sup> that thou *art* the Lord, *even* thou only.

21. Then Isaiah, the son of Amoz, sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed <sup>c</sup>

to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria:

22. This *is* the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised <sup>a</sup> thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 46. 10. <sup>c</sup> ch. 42. 8.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

- 21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz, sent unto Hezekiah, saying: Thus saith JEHOVAH, God of Israel, Because thou hast prayed unto me on account  
22. of Sennacherib king of Assyria, this is the word which JEHOVAH hath spoken concerning him:—

The virgin daughter of Zion despiseth thee, and scorneth thee;  
The daughter of Jerusalem shaketh her head at thee.

land under the protection of JEHOVAH, would be saved, all the nations would know that it could not be by the power of an idol—for no idol had been able to offer resistance. The desire of Hezekiah, therefore, was not primarily that of personal safety or the safety of his kingdom. It was that JEHOVAH might vindicate his great and holy name from reproach, and that the world might know that he was the only true God. A supreme regard to the glory of God influenced this pious monarch in his prayers, and here we have a beautiful model of the object which we should have in view when we come before God in prayer. It is not primarily that we may be saved; it is not, as the leading motive, that our friends, or that the world may be saved; it is *that the name of God may be honored*. This motive of prayer, or this object in supplication, is one that is usually, and with great frequency presented in the Bible. Comp. ch. xlii. 8; xliii. 10, 13, 25; Deut. xxxii. 39; Ps. lxxxiii. 18; xlv. 10; Neh. ix. 6; Dan. ix. 18, 19.—Perhaps there could have been furnished no more striking proof that JEHOVAH was the true God, than would be by the defeat of Sennacherib. No other nation had been able to resist the Assyrian arms. The great power of that empire was now concentrated in the

single army of Sennacherib. He was coming with great confidence of success. He was approaching the city devoted to JEHOVAH—the city where the temple was, and the city and people that were everywhere understood to be under his protection, and to be his own. The affairs of the world had arrived at a crisis; and the time had come when the great JEHOVAH could strike a blow which would be felt on all nations, and carry the terror of his name and the report of his power throughout the earth. Perhaps this was one of the main motives of the destruction of that mighty army. God intended that his power should be felt, and that monarchs and people that arrayed themselves against him, and blasphemed him, should have a striking demonstration that he was God, and that none of the devices of his enemies could succeed.

21. *Whereas thou hast prayed*. Because thou hast come to me instead of relying on thy own resources and strength. In 2 Kings xix. 20, it is, "That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, I have heard."

22. *The virgin, the daughter of Zion* Jerusalem. See Note, ch. i. 8. Comp. Note, ch. xxiii. 12. The name *virgin*, perhaps, is given to designate purity or beauty. The parallelism in this and

23. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even* against the Holy One of Israel.

24. By <sup>1</sup> thy servants hast thou reproached the LORD, and hast said, By the multitude of my cha-

<sup>1</sup> the hand of thy.

riots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the <sup>2</sup> tall cedars thereof, *and* the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, *and* the forest <sup>3</sup> of his Carmel.

<sup>2</sup> tallness of the cedars thereof, and the choice of the fir trees thereof.

<sup>3</sup> or, and his fruitful field.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

23. Whom hast thou reproached and reviled?

And against whom hast thou lifted up thy voice?

—And lifted up thine eyes on high?

—Against the Holy One of Israel.

24. By thy servants thou hast reproached the LORD and said,

“By the multitude of my chariots have I come up to the heights of the mountains, the sides of Lebanon;

“And I will cut down its tallest cedars,

“Its choicest cypresses:

“And I will come to its extreme limits,

“To its garden-forest.

the following verses shows that the poetic form of speech is here introduced. These are the words of JEHOVAH by Isaiah, and it was common for Isaiah to throw his communications into parallelisms, or into the poetic form. ¶ *Hast despised thee*, &c. That is, is safe and secure from thy contemplated attack. The idea is, that Jerusalem would be safe, and would exult over the ineffectual attempts of Sennacherib to take it, and over his complete overthrow. ¶ *And laughed thee to scorn*. Will make thee an object of derision. ¶ *Hath shaken her head at thee*. This is an indication of contempt and scorn. Comp. Ps. xxii. 7; cix. 25; Jer. xviii. 16; Zeph. ii. 15; Matt. xxvii. 39.

23. *Whom hast thou reproached*, &c. Not an idol. Not one who has no power to take vengeance, or to defend the city under his protection, but the living God, and he will now come forth, and defend the city that is under his guardian care. ¶ *Exalted thy voice*. That is, by thy messenger. Thou hast spoken in a loud, confident tone; in the

language of reproach and threatening. ¶ *And lifted up thine eyes on high*. To lift up the eyes is an indication of haughtiness and pride. He had evinced arrogance in his manner, and he was yet to learn that it was against the living and true God.

24. *By thy servants*. Heb., By the hand of thy servants. That is, by Rabshakeh (ch. xxxvi.), and by those whom he had now sent to Hezekiah with letters, vs. 9, 14. ¶ *And hast said*. Isaiah does not here quote the precise words which Rabshakeh or the other messengers had used, but quotes the substance of what had been uttered, and expresses the real feelings and intentions of Sennacherib. ¶ *By the multitude of my chariots*. The word *chariots* here denotes *war-chariots*. See Notes, ch. ii. 7; lxvi. 20. ¶ *To the height of the mountains*. Lebanon is here particularly referred to. Chariots were commonly used, as cavalry was, in plains. But it is probable that Lebanon was accessible by chariots drawn by horses. ¶ *To the sides of Lebanon*. On the situation of Lebanon, see Notes, x. 34; xxix. 17.

25. I have digged, and drunk feet have I dried up all the rivers water; and with the sole of my of the <sup>1</sup> besieged places.

<sup>1</sup> or, fenced, or closed.

NEW TRANSLATION.

25. "I have digged [wells] and have drunk waters;

"And with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the streams of Egypt."

Sennacherib is represented as having carried desolation to Lebanon, and as having cut down its stately trees. See Note, ch. xxxiii. 9. ¶ *I will cut down the tall cedars thereof.* Marg., *the tallness of the cedars thereof.* The boast of Sennacherib was, that he would strip it of its beauty and ornament; that is, that he would lay the land waste. ¶ *And the choice fir trees thereof.* See Note, ch. xiv. 8. The LXX render it, "the beauty of the cypress—*κυπαρισσόν.*" The word here denotes the *cypress*, a tree resembling the white cedar. It grew on Lebanon, and together with the cedar constituted its glory. Its wood, like that of the cedar, was employed for the floors and ceilings of the temple. 1 Kings v. 22, 24; vi. 15, 34. It was used for the decks and sheathing of ships, Ezek. xxvii. 5; for spears, Nah. ii. 3; and for musical instruments, 2 Sam. vi. 5. ¶ *The height of his border.* The extreme retreats; the farthest part of Lebanon. There shall be no part which I will not visit, and ravage. In 2 Kings xix. 23, it is, "I will enter the lodgings of his borders;" perhaps referring to the fact that on the ascent to the top of the mountain there was a place for the repose of travellers; a species of inn or caravansera which bounded the usual attempts of persons to ascend the mountain. It is not uncommon that there should be such a lodging place on the sides or tops of mountains which are frequently ascended. ¶ *And the forest of his Carmel.* On the meaning of the word *Carmel*, see Note, ch. xxix. 17. Here it means, as in that passage, a rich, fertile, and beautiful country. It is known that Lebanon was covered on the top, and far down the sides, with perpetual snow. But there was a region lying on its sides, between the snow and the base of the mountain,

that was distinguished for its fertility, and that was highly cultivated. This region produced grapes, and the other productions of the land of Palestine, in abundance; and this cultivated region, thick set with vines and trees, might be called a beautiful grove. This was, doubtless, the portion of Lebanon which is here intended. At a distance, this tract on the sides of Lebanon appeared, doubtless, as a *thicket* of shrubs and trees. The phrase "garden-forest," will probably express the sense of the passage. "After leaving Baalbec, and approaching Lebanon, towering walnut-trees, either singly or in groups, and a rich carpet of verdure, the offspring of numerous streams, give to this charming district the air of an English park, majestically bordered with snow-tipped mountains. At Deir el Akmaar the ascent begins—winding among dwarf oaks, hawthorns, and a great variety of shrubs and flowers. A deep bed of snow had now to be crossed, and the horses sunk or slipped at every moment. To ride was impracticable, and to walk dangerous, for the melting snow penetrated our boots, and our feet were nearly frozen. An hour and a half brought us to the cedars." Hogg.

25. *I have digged.* That is, I have digged wells. This was regarded among eastern nations as an important achievement. It was difficult often to find water, even by digging, in sandy deserts; and in a country abounding with rocks, it was an enterprise of great difficulty to sink a well. Hence the possession of a well became a valuable property, and was sometimes the occasion of contention between neighbouring tribes. Gen. xxvi. 20. Hence to stop up the wells of water, by throwing in rocks or sand, became one of the most obvious ways of distressing an

enemy, and was often resorted to. Gen. xxvi. 15, 18; 2 Kings iii. 19, 25. Hence also to dig wells, or to furnish water in abundance to a people, became an achievement which was deemed worthy to be recorded in the history of kings and princes, 2 Chron. xxvi. 10. Many of the most stupendous and costly of the works of the Romans in the capital of their empire, and in the principal towns of their provinces, consisted in building aqueducts to bring water from a distance into a city. An achievement like this, I understand Sennacherib as boasting he had performed; that he had furnished water for the cities and towns of his mighty empire; that he had accomplished what was deemed so difficult, and what required so much expense, as digging wells for his people; and that he had secured them from being stopped up by his enemies, so that he and his people drank of the water in peace. Gesenius, however, understands this as a boast that he had extended the bounds of his empire beyond its original limits, and unto regions that were naturally destitute of water, and where it was necessary to dig wells to supply his armies. Rosenmüller understands it as saying, "I have passed over, and taken possession of foreign lands." Drusus regards it as a proverbial saying, meaning, "I have happily and successfully accomplished all that I have undertaken, as he who digs a well accomplishes that which he particularly desires." Vitringa regards it as saying, "that to dig wells, and to drink the water of them, is to enjoy the fruit of our labours, to be successful and happy." But it seems to me that the interpretation above suggested, and which I have not found in any of the commentators before me, is the correct exposition. ¶ *And drunk water.* In 2 Kings xix. 24, it is, "I have drunk *strange* waters;" that is, the waters of foreign lands, I have conquered them, and have dug wells in them. But the sense is not materially changed. ¶ *And with the sole of my feet, &c.* Expressions like this, denoting the desolations of a conqueror, are found in the classic writers. Perhaps the idea there is, that their

armies were so numerous that they drank up all the waters in their march—a strong hyperbole to denote the number of their armies, and the extent of their desolations when even the waters failed before them. Thus Claudian (*de bello Getico*, 526) introduces Alaric as boasting of his conquests in the same extravagant manner, and in language remarkably similar to this.

"Cum cesserit omnis  
Obsequiis natura meis? Subsistere nostris  
Sub pedibus montes; arescere vidimus amnes—  
Fregi Alpes, galeisque Padum victricibus

So Juvenal (Sat. x. 176), speaking of the dominion of Xerxes, says:

'credimus altos  
Defecisse amnes, epotaque flumina Medo  
Prudente.'

The boast of drying up streams with the sole of the foot is intended to convey the idea that he had not only supplied water for his own empire by digging wells, but that he had cut off the supplies of water from the others against whom he had made war. The idea perhaps is, that if such an army as his was, should pass through the streams of a country that they should invade, and should only take away the water that would adhere to the sole or the hollow of the foot on their march, it would dry up all the streams. It is strong hyperbolical language, and is designed to indicate the number of the forces which were under his command. ¶ *Of the besieged places.* Marg., "fenced, or closed." The word rendered *rivers*, נָחַל, may denote canals, or artificial streams, such as were common in Egypt. In ch. xix. 6, it is rendered "brooks," and is applied to the artificial canals of Egypt. See Note on that place. The word here rendered "besieged places," מִצְרֹר, *mützör*, may mean distress, straitness, Deut. xxviii. 53; siege, Ezek. iv. 2, 7; mound, bulwark, intrenchment, Deut. xx. 20; or it may be a proper name for Egypt, being one of the forms of the name, מִצְרַיִם, *mitzraim*, or Egypt. The same phrase occurs in ch. xix. 6, where it means Egypt (see Note on that place), and such should be regarded as its meaning here. It alludes to the conquests

26. Hast thou not heard <sup>1</sup> long ago, *how* I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I <sup>c</sup> brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay

<sup>1</sup> or, *how I have made it long ago, and formed it of ancient times? should I now bring it to be laid waste, and defenced cities to be ruinous heaps?*

e ch. 10. 5, 6.

waste defenced cities *into* ruinous

27. Therefore their inhabitants *were* <sup>1</sup> of small power, they were dismayed and confounded: they were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb, *as* the grass on the housetops, and *as* corn blasted before it be grown up.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

26. Hast thou not heard that of old I have disposed it?

And that from ancient times I have arranged it?

Now I have brought it to pass,

That thou shouldst be to convert fortified cities into heaps of ruins.

27. Therefore were their inhabitants of enfeebled strength;

They were dispirited, and ashamed:

They were as grass of the field, as the green herb—

The grass of the house-top,

And the blighted grain before it is grown up.

which Sennacherib is represented as boasting that he had made in Egypt, that he had easily removed obstructions, and destroyed their means of defence. Though he had been repulsed before Pelusium by Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia (see Note, ch. xxxvi. 1), yet it is not improbable that he had taken many towns there, and had subdued no small part of the country to himself. In his vain boasting, he would strive to forget his repulse, and would dwell on the ease of conquest, and the facility with which he had removed all obstructions from his way. The whole language of the verse, therefore, is that of a proud and haughty oriental prince, desirous of proclaiming his conquests, and forgetting his mortifying defeats.

26. *Hast thou not heard, &c.* This is evidently the language of God addressed to Sennacherib. It is designed to state to him that he was under his control; that he had long before formed the plan; that this was the reason (ver. 27) why the inhabitants of the nations had been unable to resist him; that he was entirely in his hands (ver. 28); and that he would control him as he pleased, (ver. 29, &c.) ¶ *Long ago, how I have done it.* You boast that

all this is by your own counsel and power. Yet I have done it; *i. e.*, I have purposed, planned, arranged it long ago. Comp. ch. xxii. 11. ¶ *That thou shouldest be to lay waste, &c.* I have raised you up for this purpose, and you have been entirely under my control. See Note, ch. x. 5.

27. *Therefore.* Not because you have so great power; but because I have rendered them imbecile, and incapable of resisting you. ¶ *Were of small power.* Heb., “short of hand;” they were feeble, imbecile, unable to resist you. ¶ *They were dismayed.* Heb., “they were broken and ashamed.” Their spirits sank; they were ashamed of their feeble powers of resistance; and they submitted to the ignominy of a surrender. ¶ *They were as the grass of the field, &c.* The same idea is expressed by Sennacherib himself in ch. x. 15, though under a different image. See Note on that verse. The idea here is, as the grass of the field is easily trodden down and offers no resistance to the march of an army, so it was with the strongly fortified towns in the way of Sennacherib. ¶ *As the grass on the housetops.* In eastern countries the roofs of houses are always flat.

28. But I know thy<sup>1</sup> abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook<sup>f</sup> in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

29. Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up

<sup>1</sup> or, *sitting*.

<sup>f</sup> ch. 30. 28. Ezek. 33. 4.

NEW TRANSLATION.

28. And thy sitting down, and thy going out, and thy coming in,  
And thy rage against me, I have known.

29. Because thy rage against me, and thy insolence, is come up into  
mine ears,

Therefore will I put my ring into thy nose,

And my bridle into thy jaws,

And I will turn thee back in the way in which thou camest.

They are made of a mixture of sand, gravel, or earth; and on the houses of the rich there is a firmly constructed flooring made of coals, chalk, gypsum, and ashes made hard by being beaten, or rolled. On these roofs spears of wheat, barley, or grass sometimes sprung up, but they were soon withered by the heat of the sun. Ps. cxxix. 6—8. The idea here, therefore, is that of the greatest feebleness. His enemies were not simply like the grass in the field, but they were like the thin, slender, and delicate blade that sprung up in the little earth on the roof of a house, where there was no room for the roots to strike down, and where the sickly blade soon withered beneath the burning sun. ¶ As corn *blasted before it be grown up*. Before it amounts to anything, before it acquires any strength. As the wheat or barley which a blast strikes as soon as it springs out of the earth, and before the stalk acquires any strength, or firmness. The idea in all these phrases is substantially the same—that they were incapable of offering even the feeblest resistance.

28. *But I know*. The language of God. I am well acquainted with all that pertains to you. You neither go out to war, nor return, nor abide in your capital without my knowledge, and my providential direction. See Notes, ch. x. 5—7. ¶ *Thy abode*. Marg., *sitting*. Among the Hebrews, sitting down, and rising up, and going

out, were phrases to describe the whole of a man's life and actions. Comp. Deut. vi. 7; xxviii. 6; Ps. cxxi. 8; 1 Kings iii. 7. God here says that he knew the place where he dwelt, and he was able to return him again to it, ver. 29. ¶ *Thy going out, &c.* Your going out to war, and your return; or your whole plan and manner of life. ¶ *And thy rage against me*. See ver. 4.

29. *Because thy rage—and thy tumult*. Or rather, thy pride, thy insolence, thy vain boasting. ¶ *Therefore will I put my hook in thy nose*. This is a most striking expression, denoting the complete control which God had over the haughty monarch, and his ability to guide and direct him as he pleased. The language is taken from the custom of putting a ring or hook in the nose of a wild animal, for the purpose of governing and guiding it. The most strong and violent animals may be thus completely governed, and this is often done with those animals that are fierce and untameable. The Arabs often pursue this course in regard to the camel, and thus have it under entire control. A similar image is used in respect to the king of Egypt. Ezek. xxix. 4. The idea is, that God would control and govern the wild and ambitious spirit of the Assyrian, and that with infinite ease he could conduct him again to his own land. ¶ *And my bridle, &c.* Note, ch. xxx. 28. ¶ *And I will turn thee back, &c.* See ver. 37.

30. And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

30. And this shall be a sign unto thee :  
 Eat this year that which groweth spontaneously,  
 And the second year, that which groweth spontaneously from that;  
 And in the third year sow, and reap,  
 And plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.

30. *And this shall be a sign unto thee.* It is evident that the discourse here is turned from Sennacherib to Hezekiah. Such transitions, without distinctly indicating them, are common in Isaiah. God had in the previous verses, in the form of a direct personal address, foretold the defeat of Sennacherib, and the confusion of his plans. He here turns and gives to Hezekiah the assurance that Jerusalem would be delivered. On the meaning of the word *sign*, see Note on ch. vii. 14. Commentators have been much perplexed on the exposition of the passage before us to know how that which was to occur one, two, or three years after the event, could be a *sign* of the fulfilment of the prophecy. Many have supposed that the year in which this was spoken was a Sabbatic year, in which the lands were not cultivated, but were required to lie still (Lev. xxv. 2—7); and that the year following was the year of Jubilee, in which also the lands were to remain uncultivated. They suppose that the idea is, that the Jews might be *assured* that they would not experience the evils of famine which they had anticipated from the Assyrians, because the divine promise gave them assurance of supply in the Sabbatic year, and in the year of Jubilee, and that although their fields had been laid waste by the Assyrian, yet their wants would be supplied, until on the third year they would be permitted in quietness to cultivate their land, and that this would be to them a *sign*, or a token of the divine interposition. But to this there are two obvious objections. (1.) There is not the

slightest evidence that the year in which Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem was a Sabbatic year, or that the following year was the Jubilee. No mention is made of this in the history, nor is it possible to prove that it was, from any part of the sacred narrative. (2.) It is still difficult to see, even if it were so, how that which was to occur two or three years after the event, could be a sign to Hezekiah then of the truth of what Isaiah had predicted. Rosenmüller suggests that the two years in which they are mentioned as sustained by the spontaneous production of the earth were the two years in which Judea had been already ravaged by Sennacherib, and that the third year was the one in which the prophet was now speaking, and that the prediction means that in that very year they would be permitted to sow and reap. In the explanation of the passage, it is to be observed that the word *sign* is used in a variety of significations. It may be used as an *indication* of anything unseen, Gen. i. 14; or as a military ensign, Num. ii. 2; or as a sign of something future, an omen, Isa. viii. 18; or as a token, argument, proof, Gen. xvii. 2; Ex. xxxi. 13. It may be used as a sign or token of the truth of a prophecy; that is, when some minor event furnishes a proof that the whole prophecy would be fulfilled, Ex. iii. 12; 1 Sam. ii. 34; x. 7, 9. Or it may be used as a *wonder*, a *prodigy*, a *miracle*, Deut. iv. 34; vi. 22. In the case before us, it seems to mean that, in the events predicted here, Hezekiah would have a token or argument that the land was





32. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and <sup>1</sup> they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.

33. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this

<sup>1</sup> the escaping.

city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with <sup>2</sup> shields, nor cast a bank against it.

34. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

<sup>2</sup> shield.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

32. For from Jerusalem shall go forth the remnant;

And they that are escaped from mount Zion.

The zeal of JEHOVAH of hosts shall effect this.

33. Therefore thus saith JEHOVAH concerning the king of Assyria:

He shall not come into this city,

And he shall not shoot an arrow there,

And he shall not come before it with a shield,

And he shall not cast up a mound against it.

34. By the way in which he came, by the same shall he return,

And into this city shall he not come, saith JEHOVAH.

cherib could have invaded the land, and spread desolation for so long a time, without diminishing the number of the people. The promise in the passage is, that those who were left should flourish and increase. The land should be at rest; and under the administration of their wise and pious king, their number would be augmented, and their happiness promoted. ¶ *Shall again take root downward.* Like a tree that had been prevented by any cause from growing or bearing fruit. This is a beautiful figure. A tree, to bear well, must be in a soil where it can strike its roots deep. The sense is, that all obstructions to their growth and prosperity would be removed.

32. *Shall go forth a remnant.* The word *remnant* means that which is left; and does not of necessity imply that it should be a small portion. No doubt a part of the Jews were destroyed in the invasion of Sennacherib, but the assurance is here given that a portion of them should remain in safety, and that they should constitute that from which the future prosperity of the state would arise. ¶ *And they that escape.* Marg., *The escaping*, i. e., the remnant,

that which is left. ¶ *The zeal.* See Note on ch. ix. 7.

33. *He shall not come unto this city.* Sennacherib encamped probably on the north-west side of the city, and his army was destroyed there. ¶ *Nor shoot an arrow there.* That is, nor shoot an arrow within the walls of the city. ¶ *Nor come before it with shields.* See Note, ch. xxi. 5. The meaning here is, that the army should not be permitted to come before the city defended with shields, and prepared with the means of attack and defence. ¶ *Nor cast a bank against it.* A mound; a pile of earth thrown up in the manner of a fort to defend the assailants, or to give them an advantage in attacking the walls. Sieges were conducted by throwing up banks or fortifications, behind which the army of attack could be secure to carry on their operations. Towers, filled with armed men, were also constructed, covered with hides and other impenetrable materials, which could be made to approach the walls, and from which those who were within could safely attack those who were on the walls.

34. *By the way that he came, &c.* Ver. 29. Comp. ver. 37. ¶ *And shall not*

35. For I <sup>s</sup> will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

36. Then <sup>h</sup> the angel of the

g ch. 38. 6. Jer. 17. 25, 26.  
A ch. 10. 12, &c.

LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

35. And I will protect this city to deliver it,

For mine own sake, and for the sake of David my servant.

36. And the angel of JEHOVAH went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and eighty-five thousand men; and when they

come into this city. Ver. 33. Comp. ch. xxix. 6—8.

35. *For I will defend this city.* Notwithstanding all that Hezekiah had done to put it in a posture of defence (2 Chron. xxxii. 1, seq.) still it was JEHOVAH alone who could preserve it. ¶ *For mine own sake.* God had been reproached and blasphemed by Sennacherib, and by Rabshakeh. As the name and power of JEHOVAH had been thus blasphemed he says that he will vindicate himself, and for the honour of his own insulted majesty would save the city. ¶ *And for my servant David's sake.* On account of the promise which he had made to him, that there should not fail a man to sit on his throne, and that the city and nation should not be destroyed until the Messiah should appear. See Ps. cxxxii. 10—18. God would not forget his promises, and would now interpose to save the city.

36. *Then the angel, &c.* This verse contains the record of one of the most remarkable events that have occurred in history. Many attempts have been made to explain the occurrence which is here recorded, and to trace the agencies, or means, which God employed. It may be observed that the use of the word "angel" here, does not determine the manner in which it was done. So far as the word is concerned, it might have been accomplished either by the dread power of an invisible messenger of God—a spiritual being commissioned for this purpose; or it might have been by some second causes under the direction of an angel—as the pestilence, or a storm, and tempest; or it might

have been by some agents sent by God, whatever they were—the storm, the pestilence, or the simoom, to which the name angel might have been applied. The word angel (מַלְאָךְ, from מָלַךְ, to send,) means properly one sent, a messenger, from a private person. Job i. 14; from a king, 1 Sam. xvi. 19; xix. 11, 14, 20. Then it means a messenger of God, and is applied (1.) to an angel, Ex. xxiii. 20; 2 Sam. xxiv. 16; and often (2.) to a prophet, Hagg. i. 13; Mal. iii. 1; (3.) to a priest, Eccl. v. 5; Mal. ii. 7. The word may be applied to any messenger sent from God, whoever or whatever that may be. Thus in Ps. civ. 4, the winds are said to be his angels, or messengers:

Who maketh the winds (רוּחַ) his angels (מַלְאָכָיו);

The flaming fire his ministers.

The general sense of the word is that of ambassador, messenger, one sent to bear a message, to execute a commission, or to perform any work or service. It is known that the Jews were in the habit of tracing all events to the agency of invisible beings sent forth by God to accomplish his purposes in this world. There is nothing in this opinion that is contrary to reason; for there is no more improbability in the existence of a good angel, than there is in the existence of a good man; or in the existence of an evil spirit, than there is in the existence of a bad man. And there is no more improbability in the supposition that God employs invisible and heavenly messengers to accomplish his purposes, than there is that he employs man,

Whatever, therefore, were the means used in the destruction of the Assyrian army, there is no improbability in the opinion that they were under the direction of a celestial agent sent forth to accomplish the purpose. It should be remarked, also, that the use of the word *angel* does not *prove* that there was any such invisible being, but the name *may* be given to *any* messenger employed by God to execute his purpose, and so far as the name is concerned, it may have been by pestilence, the simoom, or a tempest. The chief suppositions which have been made of the means of that destruction are the following—(1.) It has been supposed that it was by the direct agency of an angel, without any second causes. But this supposition has not been generally adopted. It is contrary to the usual modes in which God directs the affairs of the world. His purposes are usually accomplished by some second causes, and in accordance with the usual course of events. Calvin supposes that it was accomplished by the direct agency of one or more angels sent forth for the purpose. (2.) Some have supposed that it was accomplished by Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, who is supposed to have pursued Sennacherib, and to have overthrown his army in a single night, near Jerusalem. But it is sufficient to say in reply to this, that there is not the slightest historical evidence to support it; and had this been the mode, it would have been so recorded, and the fact would have been stated. (3.) It has been attributed by some, among whom is Prideaux, (*Connections*, vol. i. p. 143), and J. E. Faber, (*Notes on Harmer's Observations*, Part i. p. 65), to the hot pestilential wind which often prevails in the East, and which is often represented as suddenly destroying travellers, and, indeed, whole caravans. This wind, called *sam*, *simûm*, *samiel*, or *simoom*, has been usually supposed to be poisonous, and almost instantly destructive to life. It has been described by Mr. Bruce, by Sir R. K. Porter, by Niebuhr, and by others. Prof. Robinson has examined at length the supposition that the Assyrian army was destroyed by this wind, and has stated the results of the investigations

of recent travellers. The conclusion to which he comes is, that the former accounts of the effects of this wind have been greatly exaggerated, and that the destruction of the army of the Assyrians cannot be attributed to any such cause. See the article "Winds," in his *Edition of Calmet's Dictionary*. Burckhardt says of this wind, whose effects have been regarded as so poisonous and destructive, "I am PERFECTLY CONVINCED that all the stories which travellers, or the inhabitants of the towns of Egypt and Syria, relate of the simoom of the desert are greatly exaggerated, and I *never could hear of a SINGLE WELL AUTHENTICATED INSTANCE of its having proved mortal to either man or beast.*" Similar testimony has been given by other modern travellers; though it is to be remarked that the testimony is rather of a *negative* character, and does not entirely destroy the possibility of the supposition that this so often described pestilential wind may in some instances prove fatal. It is not, however, referred to in the Scripture account of the destruction of Sennacherib; and whatever may be true of it in the deserts of Arabia or Nubia, there is no evidence whatever that such poisonous effects are ever experienced in Palestine. (4.) It has been attributed to a storm of hail, accompanied with thunder and lightning. This is the opinion of Vitranga, and this seems to accord with the descriptions which are given in the prophecy of the destruction of the army in ch. xxix. 6; xxx. 30. To this opinion, as the most probable, I have been disposed to incline; for although these passages *may* be regarded as figurative, yet the more natural interpretation is to regard them as descriptive of the event. We know that such a tempest might be easily produced by God, and that violent tornadoes are not unfrequent in the East. One of the plagues of Egypt consisted in such a tremendous storm of hail accompanied with thunder; and "the fire ran along the ground," so that "there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail," and so that "the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast." Ex. ix. 22—25. This descrip-

37. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and re- | turned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

NEW TRANSLATION.

37. [the people] arose in the morning they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria decamped, and went away, and returned, and

tion, in its terror, its suddenness, and its ruinous effects, accords more nearly with the account of the destruction of Sennacherib, than any other which has been made. (6.) It has been supposed by many that it was accomplished by the pestilence. This is the account which Josephus gives (*Ant. B. x. ch. 1, §5*); and is the supposition which has been adopted by Rosenmüller, Döderlin, Michaelis, Hensler, and many others. But there are two objections to this supposition. One is, that it does not well accord with the description of the prophet (*ch. xxix. 6; xxx. 30*); and the other, and more material one is, that the plague does not accomplish its work so suddenly. This was done in a single night; whereas, though the plague appears suddenly, and has been known to destroy whole armies, yet there is no recorded instance in which it has been so destructive in a few hours as in this case. It may be added, also, that the plague does not often leave an army in the manner described here. One hundred and eighty-five thousand were suddenly slain. The survivors, if there were any, as we have reason to suppose (*ver. 37*), fled, and returned to Nineveh. There is no mention made of any who lingered, and who remained sick among the slain. Nor is there any apprehension mentioned, as having existed among the Jews, of going into the camp, and stripping the dead, and bearing the spoils of the army into the city. Had the army been destroyed by the plague, or the pestilence, such is the fear of the contagion in countries where it prevails, that nothing would have induced them to endanger the city by the possibility of introducing the dreaded disease. The account leads us to suppose that the inhabitants of Jerusalem immediately sallied forth and stripped the dead, and bore the spoils of the army into the city. See Note, *ch. xxxiii. 4, 24*.

On the whole, therefore, the most probable supposition seems to be, that, if any secondary causes were employed, it was the agency of a violent tempest—a tempest of mingled hail and fire, which suddenly descended upon the mighty army. Whatever was the agent, however, it was the hand of God that directed it. It was a most fearful exhibition of his power, and justice. And it furnishes a most awful threatening to proud and haughty blasphemers, and revilers; and a strong ground of assurance to the righteous, that God will defend them in times of peril.

To this statement it may be added, that Herodotus has given an account which was undoubtedly derived from some rumor of the entire destruction of the Assyrian army. He says (*B. ii. ch. 141.*) that when Sennacherib was in Egypt, and engaged in the siege of Pelusium, an Egyptian priest prayed to God, and God heard his prayer, and sent a judgment upon him. For, says he, “a multitude of mice gnawed to pieces, in one night, both the bows and the rest of the armour of the Assyrians, and that it was on that account that the king, when he had no bows left, drew off his army from Pelusium.” This is probably a corruption of the history which we have here. At all events, the account in Herodotus does not conflict with the main statement of Isaiah, but is rather a confirmation of that statement that the army of Sennacherib met with sudden discomfiture. ¶ *And when they arose, &c.* At the time of rising in the morning; when the surviving part of the army arose, or when the Jews arose, and looked toward the camp of the Assyrians.

37. *So Sennacherib—departed.* Probably with some portion of his army and retinue with him. It is by no means probable that the whole army had been destroyed. In 2 Chron.

38. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote<sup>1</sup>

him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of<sup>1</sup> Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

<sup>1</sup> ch. 14. 9—12.

<sup>1</sup> *Ararat.*

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

38. dwelt at Nineveh. And as he was worshipping in the temple of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat; and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

xxxii. 21, it is said that the angel "cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria." His army was thus entirely disabled, and the loss of so large a part of it, and the consternation produced by their sudden destruction, would of course lead him to abandon the siege. ¶ *Went and returned.* Went from before Jerusalem, and returned to his own land. ¶ *And dwelt at Nineveh.* How long he dwelt there is not certainly known. Berossus, the Chaldean, says it was "a little while." See Jos. Ant. B. x. ch. 1, § 5. Nineveh was on the Tigris, and was the capital of Assyria. For an account of its site, and its present situation, see The American Biblical Repository, for Jan. 1837, pp. 139—159.

38. *As he was worshipping.* Perhaps this time was selected because he might be then attended with fewer guards, or because they were able to surprise him without the possibility of his summoning his attendants to his rescue. ¶ *In the house.* In the temple. ¶ *Of Nisroch his god.* The god whom he particularly adored. Gesenius supposes that the word *Nisroch* denotes an eagle, or a great eagle. The eagle was regarded as a sacred bird in the Persian religion, and was the symbol of Ormuzd. This god or idol had been probably introduced into Nineveh from Persia. Among the ancient Arabs the eagle occurs as an idol. Josephus calls the idol Araskes; the author of the book of Tobit calls it Dagon. Vitringus supposes that it was the Assyrian Bel, and was worshipped under the figure of

Mars, the god of war. More probably it was the figure of the eagle, though it might have been regarded as the god of war. ¶ *That Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword.* What was the cause of this rebellion and parricide is unknown. These two sons subsequently became, in Armenia, the heads of two celebrated families there, the Arzerunii and the Genunii. See Josephus' Ant. B. x. ch. i. § 5, Note. ¶ *And they escaped.* &c. This would lead us to suppose that it was some private matter which led them to commit the parricide, and that they did not do it with the expectation of succeeding to the crown. ¶ *Into the land of Armenia.* Heb., as in the margin, *Ararat*. The Chaldee renders this, "the land of 𐤀𐤓𐤕𐤕, *Kardoo*"—that is, *Kardianum*, or the mountains of the Kurds. The modern Koordistan includes a considerable part of the ancient Assyria and Media, together with a large portion of Armenia. This expression is generally substituted for Ararat by the Syriac, Chaldee, and Arabic translators, when they do not retain the original word *Ararat*. It is a region among the mountains of Ararat, or Armenia. The Syriac renders it in the same way ܐܪܪܬ ܕܩܪܕܝܐ, of *Kurdoya*—the Kurds. The LXX render it "into Armenia." Jerome says that "Ararat was a champaign region in Armenia, through which the Araxes flowed, and was of considerable fertility." Ararat was a region or province in Armenia, near the middle of the country between the Araxes and the lakes Van and

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1. In <sup>a</sup> those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz,

<sup>a</sup> 2 Kings 20. 1, &c. 2 Chron. 32. 24.

came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, <sup>1</sup> Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.

<sup>1</sup> Give charge concerning thy house.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

1. In those days was Hezekiah sick with a mortal disease, and Isaiah the son of Amoz, the prophet, came unto him and said unto him, Thus saith JEHOVAH, Give command concerning thy house, for thou shalt die,

Ormiah. It is still called by the Armenians *Ararat*. On one of the mountains in this region the ark of Noah rested. Gen. viii. 4. The name *Ararat* belongs properly to the region of country, and not to any particular mountain. For an account of this region, see Sir R. K. Porter's *Travels*, vol. i. p. 178, seq.; Smith and Dwight's *Researches in Armenia*, vol. ii. p. 73, seq.; and Morier's *Second Journey*, p. 312. For a very interesting account of the situation of Ararat, including a description of an ascent to the summit of the mountain which bears that name, see the *Biblical Repository* for April, 1836, pp. 390—416. "The origin of the name Armenia is unknown. The Armenians call themselves after their fabulous progenitor Haig, and derive the name *Armen* from the son of Haig, *Armenag*. They are probably a tribe of the ancient Assyrians; their language and history speak alike in favor of it. Their traditions say also that Haig came from Babylon."

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## ANALYSIS.

This chapter contains the record of an important transaction which occurred in the time of Isaiah, and in which he was deeply interested—the dangerous sickness, and the remarkable recovery of Hezekiah. It is introduced here, doubtless, because the account was drawn up by Isaiah, and is a part of his writings (see Analysis of ch. xxxvi.); and because it records the agency of Isaiah at an important crisis of the history. A record of the same trans-

action, evidently from the same hand, occurs in 2 Kings xx. 1—11. But the account differs more than the records in the two previous chapters. It is *abridged* in Isaiah by omitting what is recorded in Kings in ver. 4, and in the close of ver. 6, it is *transposed* in the statement which occurs in regard to the application of the "lump of figs;" and it is *enlarged* by the introduction of the record which Hezekiah made of his sickness and recovery, vs. 9—20.

The contents of the chapter are (1.) the statement of the dangerous sickness of Hezekiah, and the message of God to him by the prophet, ver. 1; (2.) the prayer which Hezekiah offered for his recovery, vs. 3, 4; (3.) the assurance which God gave to him by the prophet that his days should be lengthened out fifteen years, and the sign given to confirm it by the retrocession of the shadow on the sun-dial of Ahaz, vs. 4—8; (4.) the record which Hezekiah made in gratitude to God for his recovery, vs. 9—20; and (5.) the statement of the manner in which his recovery was effected, vs. 21, 22.

1. *In those days.* At that time; or his sickness commenced about the period in which the army of Sennacherib was destroyed. It has been made a question whether the sickness of Hezekiah was before or after the invasion of Sennacherib. The most natural interpretation certainly is, that it occurred *after* that invasion, and probably at no distant period. The only objection to this view is the statement in ver. 6, that God would deliver him out of the hand of the king of Assyria, which has

been understood by many as implying that he was then threatened with the invasion. But this may mean simply that he would be *perpetually and finally* delivered from his hand; he would be secure in the independence of a foreign yoke which he had long sought (2 Kings xviii. 7); and the Assyrian should not be able again to bring the Jews into subjection. See Note, ch. xxxvii. 30, 31. Comp. Note on ver. 6. Jerome supposes that it was brought upon him lest his heart should be elated with the signal triumph, and in order that, in his circumstances, he might be kept humble. Josephus says that the sickness occurred soon after the destruction of the army of Sennacherib. Ant. B. x. ch. ii. § 1. Prideaux places his sickness *before* the invasion of the Assyrians. Connex. vol. i. p. 137. ¶ *Was—sick.* What was the exact nature of this sickness is not certainly known. In ver. 21 it is said that it was a “boil,” and probably it was a pestilential boil. The pestilence or plague is attended with an eruption or boil. “No one,” says Jahn, “ever recovered from the pestilence unless the boil of the pestilence came out upon him, and even then he could not always be cured.” Archæol. § 190. The pestilence was, and is still, rapid in its progress. It terminates the life of those who are affected with it almost immediately, and at the farthest within three or four days. Hence we see one ground of the alarm of Hezekiah. Another cause of his anxiety was, that he had at this time no children, and consequently he had reason to apprehend that his kingdom would be thrown into contention by conflicting strifes for the crown. ¶ *Unto death.* Ready to die; with a sickness which in the ordinary course would terminate his life. ¶ *Set thine house in order.* Heb., “Give command (צַו) to thy house,” i. e., to thy family. If you have any directions to give in regard to the succession to the crown, or in regard to domestic and private arrangements, let it be done soon. Hezekiah was yet in middle life. He came to the throne when he was twenty-

five years old (2 Kings xviii. 2), and he had now reigned about fourteen years. It is possible that he had as yet made no arrangements in regard to the succession, and as this was very important to the peace of the nation, Isaiah was sent to him to apprise him of the necessity of leaving the affairs of his kingdom so that there should not be anarchy when he should die. The direction, also, may be understood in a more general sense, as denoting that he was to make whatever arrangements might be necessary as preparatory to his death. We see here (1.) the boldness and fidelity of a man of God. Isaiah was not afraid to go in and freely tell even a monarch that he must die. The subsequent part of the narrative would lead us to suppose that until this announcement, Hezekiah did not regard himself as in immediate danger. It is evident here, that the *physician* of Hezekiah had not informed him of it—*perhaps* from fear, perhaps from the apprehension that his disease would be aggravated by the agitation of his mind on the subject. The duty was, therefore, left, as it is often, and indeed generally now, to a minister of religion—a duty which even many ministers are slow to perform, and which many physicians are reluctant to *have* performed. (2.) No danger is to be apprehended commonly from announcing to those who are sick their true condition. Friends and relatives are often reluctant to do it, for fear of agitating and alarming them. Physicians often prohibit them from knowing their true condition under the apprehension that their disease may be aggravated. Yet here was a case in which pre-eminently there might be danger from announcing the approach of death. The disease was deeply seated. It was making rapid progress. It was usually incurable. Nay, there was here a moral certainty that the monarch would die. And this was a case, therefore, which particularly demanded, it would seem, that the patient should be kept quiet, and free from alarms. But God regarded it as of great importance that he should know his true condition; and the pro-



2. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord,

NEW TRANSLATION.

2. and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and made

phet was directed to go to him and faithfully to state it. Physicians and friends often err in this. There is no species of cruelty greater than to suffer a friend to lie on a dying bed under a delusion. There is no sin more aggravated than that of designedly deceiving a dying man, and flattering him with the hope of recovery when there is a moral certainty that he will not, and cannot recover. And there is evidently no danger to be apprehended from communicating to the sick their true condition. It should be done tenderly, and with affection; but it should be done faithfully. I have had many opportunities of witnessing the effect of apprizing the sick of their situation, and of the moral certainty that they must die. And I cannot now recal an instance in which the announcement has had any unhappy effect on the disease. Often, on the contrary, the effect is to calm the mind, and to lead the dying to look up to God, and peacefully to repose on him. And the effect of THAT is *always* salutary. Nothing is more favorable for a recovery than a peaceful, calm, heavenly submission to God; and the repose and quiet which physicians so much desire their patients to possess, is often best obtained by securing confidence in God, and a calm resignation to his will. (3.) Every man with the prospect of death before him should set his house in order. Death is an event which demands preparation—a preparation which should not be deferred to the dying moment. In view of it, whether it comes sooner or later, our work should be done; our peace should be made with God; and our worldly affairs so arranged that we can leave them without distraction, and without regret. ¶ *For thou shalt die, and not live.* Thy disease is incurable. It is a mortal, fatal disease. The Hebrew is, “for thou art dead” (מָת);

that is, you are a dead man. A similar expression occurs in Gen. xx. 3, in the address which God made to Abimelech: “Behold thou art a dead man on account of the woman which thou hast taken.” We have a similar phrase in our language, when a man is wounded, and when he says, “I am a dead man.” This is all that we are required to understand here, that according to the usual course of the disease, he must die. It is evident that Isaiah was not acquainted himself with the secret intention of God; nor did he know that Hezekiah would humble himself, and plead with God; nor that God would by a miracle lengthen out his life.

2. *Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall.* The wall of his palace, or of the room in which he was lying. He was probably lying on a couch next the wall of his room. Eastern houses usually have such couches or ottomans running along on the sides of the room, on which they recline, and on which they lie when they are sick. Hezekiah probably turned his face to the wall in order that his emotion and his tears might not be seen by the bystanders, or in order that he might compose himself the better for devotion. His prayer he wished doubtless to be as secret as possible. The Chaldee renders this, “turned his face to the wall of the house of the sanctuary;” that is, of the temple, so that it might appear that he prayed toward the temple. Thus Daniel when in Babylon is said to have prayed with his windows open towards Jerusalem, Dan. vi. 10. The Mohammedans pray everywhere with their faces turned toward Mecca. But there is no evidence in the Hebrew text that Hezekiah prayed in that manner. The simple idea is, that he turned over on his couch toward the wall of his room, doubtless for the greater privacy, and to hide his deep emotion.

3. And said, Remember <sup>b</sup> now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have

<sup>b</sup> Neh. 13. 14. Heb. 6. 10.

done *that which is good* in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept <sup>1</sup> sore.

4. Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying,

<sup>1</sup> *with great weeping.*

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

3. supplication unto JEHOVAH. And he said; I beseech thee, O JEHOVAH, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thine eyes. And Hezekiah wept bitterly. Then came the word of JEHOVAH to Isaiah, say-

3. *And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee.* The object which Hezekiah desired was evidently that his life might be spared, and that he might not be suddenly cut off. He, therefore, makes mention of the former course of his life, not with ostentation, or as a ground of his acceptance or justification, but *as a reason* why his life should not be cut off. He had not lived as many of the kings of Israel had done. He had not been an idolater, or a patron of idolatry. He had promoted an extensive and thorough reformation among the people. He had exerted his influence as a king in the service of JEHOVAH, and it was his purpose still to do it; and he therefore prayed that his life might be spared in order that he might carry forward and perfect his plans for the reformation of the people, and for the establishment of the worship of JEHOVAH. ¶ *How I have walked.* How I have lived. Life, in the Scriptures, is often represented as a journey; and a life of piety is represented as walking with God. See Gen. v. 24; vi. 9; 1 Kings ix. 4; xi. 33. ¶ *In truth.* In the defence and maintenance of the truth, or in sincerity. ¶ *And with a perfect heart.* With a heart sound, sincere, *entire* in thy service. This had been his leading aim; his main, grand purpose. He had not pursued his own ends; but his whole official royal influence had been on the side of religion. This refers to his *public* character rather than to his private feelings. For though, as a man, he might be deeply conscious of imperfection; yet as a king, his influence had been

wholly on the side of religion, and he had not declined from the ways of God. ¶ *And have done that which is good, &c.* This accords entirely with the account which is given of him in 2 Kings xviii. 3—5. ¶ *And Hezekiah wept sore.* Marg., as in the Heb., “with great weeping.” Josephus (Ant. B. x. ch. ii. § 1) says, that the reason why Hezekiah was so much affected, was that he was then childless, and saw that he was about to leave the government without a successor. Others suppose that it was because his death would be construed by his enemies as a judgment of God for his stripping the temple of its ornaments. 2 Kings xviii. 16. It is possible that several things may have been combined in producing the depth of his grief. In his song, or in the record which he made to express his praise to God for his recovery, the main reason of his grief which he suggested was, the fact that he was in danger of being cut off in the midst of his days; that the blessings of a long life were likely to be denied him. See vs. 10—12. We have here an instance in which even a good man may be surprised, alarmed, distressed, at the sudden announcement that he must die. The fear of death is natural; and even those who are truly pious are *sometimes* alarmed when it comes.

4. *Then came the word of the LORD, &c.* In the parallel place in 2 Kings xx. 4, it is said, “And it came to pass, after Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came unto him.” That is, the message of God came to Isaiah before he had left

5. Go, and say to Hezekiah, *fifteen years.*  
 Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days
6. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

5. ing. Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith JEHOVAH, the God of David thy father. I have heard thy supplication; I have seen thy tears.
6. Behold, I will add to thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this

Hezekiah; or as soon as Hezekiah had offered his prayer. This circumstance is omitted by Isaiah on the revision of his narrative which we have before us. But there is no contradiction. In this place it is implied that the message came to him soon, or immediately.

5. *The God of David thy father.* David is mentioned here, probably, because Hezekiah had a strong resemblance to him, and imitated his example (2 Kings xviii. 3), and because a long and happy reign had been granted to David; and also because the promise had been made to David that there should not fail a man to sit on his throne. See Note on ch. xxxvii. 35. As Hezekiah resembled David, God promised that his reign should be lengthened out; and as he perhaps was then without a son and successor, God promised him a longer life, with the prospect that he might have an heir who should succeed him on the throne. ¶ *Behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.* This is, perhaps, the only instance in which any man has been told exactly how long he would live. Why God *specified* the time cannot now be known. It, however, was a full answer to the prayer of Hezekiah; and the promise is a full demonstration that God is the hearer of prayer, and that he can answer it at once.—We learn here, that it is right for a friend of God to pray for life. In times of sickness, and even when there are indications of a fatal disease, it is not improper to pray that the disease may be removed, and the life prolonged. If the desire be to do good; to advance the kingdom of

God; to benefit others; or to perfect some plan of benevolence which is begun, it is not improper to pray that God would prolong the life. Who can tell but that he *often* thus spares useful lives when worn down with toil, and when the frame is apparently sinking to the grave, in answer to the prayers of those who love him? He does not indeed work miracles, as he did in the case of Hezekiah, but he may direct to remedies which had not before occurred; or he may himself give a sudden and unlooked-for turn to the disease, and restore the sufferer again to health.

6. *And I will deliver thee and this city, &c.* See the Analysis of the chapter. The purport of the promise is, that he and the city should be *finally* and *entirely* delivered from all danger of invasion from the Assyrians. It *might* be apprehended that Sennacherib would collect a large army and return; or that his successor would prosecute the wars which he had commenced. But the assurance here is given to Hezekiah that he had nothing more to fear from the Assyrians. See Notes, ch. xxxvii. 35; xxxi. 4, 5. In the parallel place in 2 Kings xx. 6, it is added, "I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake." In the parallel passage also in 2 Kings vii. 8, there is inserted the statement which occurs in Isaiah at the end of the chapter, vs. 21, 22. It is evident that those two verses more appropriately come in here. Lowth conjectures that the abridger of the history omitted those verses, and when he had transcribed the

7. And this *shall be a sign* <sup>c</sup> unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken; the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial <sup>1</sup> of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

8. Behold, I will bring again

<sup>c</sup> ch. 7. 11, 14.

<sup>1</sup> degrees by, or, with the sun.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

7. city. And this shall be a sign unto thee from JEHOVAH, that JEHOVAH

8. will do this thing which he hath promised. Behold, I will cause the shadow of the degrees which has gone down on the degrees [the dial] of Ahaz by the sun to go back ten degrees. And the sun returned ten degrees on the degrees which it had gone down.

song of Hezekiah, he saw that they were necessary to complete the narrative, and placed them at the end of the chapter with proper marks to have them inserted in the right place, which marks were overlooked by transcribers. It is, however, immaterial *where* the statement is made; and it is now impossible to tell in what manner the transposition occurred.

7. *And this shall be a sign unto thee.* That is, a sign, or proof that God would do what he had promised, and that Hezekiah would recover, and be permitted to go again to the temple of the Lord, ver. 22; 2 Kings xx. 8. On the meaning of the word "sign," see Notes, ch. vii. 11, 14. Comp. Note, ch. xxxvii. 30. The promise was, that he should be permitted to go to the temple in three days. 2 Kings xx. 8.

8. *Behold, I will bring again the shadow.* The shadow, or shade which is made by the interception of the rays of the sun by the gnomon on the dial. The phrase, "bring again," (Heb., מָשַׁבֵּת) means, to *cause to return* (Hiph. from שָׁבַת, to return); that is, I will cause to retrograde, or bring back. LXX, "I will turn back," ἀποτρέψω. Few subjects have perplexed commentators more than this account of the sun-dial of Ahaz. The only other place where a sun-dial is mentioned in the Scriptures is in the parallel place in 2 Kings xx. 10, where the account is somewhat more full, and the force and nature of the miracle more fully represented. "This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do

the thing which he hath spoken:—Shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, it is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees." That is, it would be in the ordinary course, or in the usual direction which the shadow takes, for it to go down, and there would be less that would be decisive in the miracle. He therefore asked that it might be moved backward from its common direction, and then there could be no doubt that it was from God. 2 Kings xx. 11: "And Isaiah the prophet cried unto JEHOVAH, and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz." ¶ *The shadow of the degrees.* That is, the shadow made on the degrees; or indicated by the degrees on the dial. But there has been much difficulty in regard to the meaning of the word *degrees*. The Hebrew word, מִקְלָה, from קָלָה, to ascend, to go up, means, properly, an ascent; a going up from a lower to a higher region; then a *step* by which one ascends, applied to the steps on a staircase, &c. 1 Kings x. 19; Ezek. xl. 26, 31, 34. Hence it may be applied to the ascending or descending figures or marks on a dial designating the ascent of the sun, or its descent; or the ascent or descent of the shadow going up or down by *steps* or hours marked on its face. The word is applied to a *dial* nowhere else but here. Josephus understands this as referring to the steps in the house, or palace of Ahaz.

"He desired that he would make the shadow of the sun which he had already made to go down ten steps in his house, to return again to the same place, and to make it as it was before;" by which he evidently regarded Hezekiah as requesting that the shadow which had gone down on the steps of the palace to return to its place ten steps backward. It is possible that the time of day *may* have been indicated by the shadow of the sun on the steps of the palace in some way that was accurate, and that this may have constituted what was called the sun-dial of Ahaz; but the more probable interpretation is that which regards the dial as a distinct and separate contrivance. The LXX render it by the word *steps*, yet understanding it as Josephus does, ἀναβαθμοὺς τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρὸς σου—the steps of the house of thy father. ¶ Which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz. Marg., "degrees by, or, with the sun." Heb., literally, "which has descended on the steps, or degrees of Ahaz by, or with the sun," ~~which~~, that is, by means of the sun; or caused by the progress of the sun. The shadow had gone down on the dial by the regular course of the sun. Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah; and it is evident from this, that the dial had been introduced by him, and had been used by him to measure time. There is no mention of any instrument for keeping time in the Bible before this, nor is it possible, perhaps, to determine the origin or character of this invention, or to know where Ahaz obtained it. Perhaps all that can be known on the subject has been collected by Calmet, to whose article [Dial] in his Dictionary, and to the Fragments of Taylor appended to his Dictionary (Fragments, ii. 102), the reader may be referred for a more full statement on this subject than is consistent with the design of these Notes. The mention of the dial does not occur before the time of Ahaz, who lived B.C. 726; nor is it certainly known that even after his time the Jews generally divided their time by hours. The word *hour* (κατακύς) occurs first in Tobit; and it has been supposed that the invention of *dials* came

from beyond the Euphrates. Herod. lib. ii. c. 109. But others suppose that it came from the Phœnicians, and that the first traces of it are discoverable in what Homer says (Odys. xv. 402) of 'an island called Syria lying above Ortygia, where the revolutions of the sun are observed.' The Phœnicians are supposed to have inhabited this island of Syria, and it is, therefore, presumed that they left there this monument of their skill in astronomy. About three hundred years after Homer, Pherecydes set up a sun-dial in the same island to distinguish the hours. The Greeks confess that Anaximander, who lived B.C. 547, under the reign of Cyrus, first divided time by hours, and introduced sun-dials among them. This was during the time of the captivity at Babylon. Anaximander travelled into Chaldea, and it is not improbable that he brought the dial from Babylon. The Chaldeans were early distinguished for their attention to astronomy, and it is probable that it was in Babylon that the sun-dial, and the division of the day into hours, was first used, and that the knowledge of that was conveyed in some way from Chaldea to Ahaz. Interpreters have differed greatly in regard to the form of the sun-dial used by Ahaz, and by the ancients generally. Cyril of Alexandria and Jerome believed it was a staircase so disposed that the sun showed the hours on it by the shadow. This, as we have seen, was the opinion of Josephus; and this opinion has been followed by many others. Others suppose it was an obelisk or pillar in the middle of a smooth pavement on which the hours were engraved, or on which lines were drawn which would indicate the hours. Grotius, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Elias Chomer, describes it thus, "It was a concave hemisphere, in the midst of which was a globe, the shadow of which fell upon several lines engraved on the concavity of the hemisphere; these lines they say were eight-and-twenty in number. This description accords nearly with the kind of dial which the Greeks called *scapha*, a boat, or *hemisphere*, the invention of which the Greeks ascribed to a Chaldean named Berosus. Vitruv. lib. ix.

9. The writing of Hezekiah sick, and was recovered of his king of Judah, when he had been sickness:

## NEW TRANSLATION.

9. THE WRITING OF HEZEKIAH KING OF JUDAH, WHEN HE HAD BEEN SICK, AND HAD RECOVERED FROM HIS SICKNESS.

cap. 9. See the plate in Taylor's Calmet, "Sun-dial of Ahaz" (figs. 1. and 2). Berosus was a priest of Belus in Babylon, and lived, indeed, perhaps three hundred years after Ahaz; but there is no necessity of supposing that he was the *inventor* of the dial. It is sufficient to suppose that he was reputed to be the first who introduced it into Greece. He went from Babylon to Greece, where he taught astronomy first at Cos, and then at Athens, where one of his dials is still shown. Herodotus expressly says (lib. i. c. 109), "the pole, the gnomon, and the division of the day into twelve parts, the Greeks received from the Babylonians." This sun-dial was portable; it did not require to be constructed for a particular spot to which it should be subsequently confined; and therefore one ready-made might have been brought from Babylon to Ahaz. That he had commerce with these countries appears by his alliance with Tiglath-Pileser, 2 Kings xvi. 7, 8. And that Ahaz was a man who was desirous of availing himself of foreign inventions and introducing them into his capital, appears evident from his desire to have constructed in Jerusalem an altar similar to the one which he had seen in Damascus, 2 Kings xvi. 10.

In regard to this miracle, it seems only necessary to observe that all that is indispensable to be believed is, that the shadow on the dial was made suddenly to recede from *any* cause. It is evident that that may have been accomplished in several ways. It may have been by arresting the motion of the earth in its revolutions, and causing it to retrograde on its axis to the extent indicated by the return of the shadow, or it may have been by a miraculous *bending*, or inclining of the rays of the sun. As there is no evidence that the event was observed elsewhere, and as it is not *necessary* to suppose that the earth was arrested in its motion, and that the whole

frame of the universe was adjusted to this change in the movement of the earth, it is most probable that it was an inclination of the rays of the sun, or a miraculous causing of the *shadow* itself to recede. This is the whole statement of the sacred writer; and this is all that is necessary to be supposed. What Hezekiah desired was a miracle; a sign that he should recover. That was granted. The retrocession of the shadow in this sudden manner was not a natural event. It could be caused only by God; and *this* was all that was needed. A simple exertion of divine power on the rays of the sun which rested on the dial deflecting those rays, would accomplish the whole result. It may be added that it is not recorded, nor is it necessary to an understanding of the subject to suppose that the bending of the rays was *permanent*, or that so much time was *lost*. The miracle was instantaneous, and was satisfactory to Hezekiah, though the rays of the sun casting the shadow may have again been soon returned to their regular position, and the shadow restored to the place in which it would have been had it not been interrupted. No infidel, therefore, can object to this statement, unless he can prove that this *could* not be done by Him who made the sun, and who is Himself the fountain of power. ¶ *By which degrees it was gone down.* By the same *steps*, or degrees on which the shadow had descended. So the LXX express it; "so the sun re-ascended the ten steps by which the shadow had gone down." It was the *shadow* on the dial which had gone down. The sun was *ascending*, and the consequence was, of course, that the shadow on a vertical dial would *descend*. The "sun" here means, evidently, the sun as it *appeared*; the rays, or the shining of the sun. A return of the shadow was effected such as would be produced by the recession of the sun itself.

9. The writing of Hezekiah, &c. This

10. I said <sup>d</sup> in the cutting off of the grave: I am deprived of my days, I shall go to the gates the residue of my years.

<sup>d</sup> Job 7. 7, &c. Ps. 77. 3, &c.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

10. I said, "In the tranquillity of my days shall I go down to the gates of Sheol;

"I am deprived of the residue of my years."

is the title to the following hymn—a record which Hezekiah made to celebrate the goodness of God in sparing him, and restoring him to health. The writing itself is *poetry*, as is indicated by the parallelism, and by the general structure. It is, in many respects, quite obscure; an obscurity perhaps arising from the brevity and conciseness which are apparent in the whole piece. It is remarkable that this song, or hymn, is not found in the parallel passage in the Book of Kings. The reason why it was omitted there, and inserted here, is unknown. It is *possible* that it was drawn up for Hezekiah by Isaiah, and that it is inserted here as a part of his composition, though adopted by Hezekiah, and declared to be *his*, that is, as expressing the gratitude of his heart on his recovery from his disease. It was common to compose an ode or hymn of praise on occasion of deliverance from calamity, or any remarkable interposition of God. See Note, ch. xii. 1; xxv. 1; xxvi. 1. Many of the Psalms of David were composed on such occasions, and were expressive of his gratitude to God for deliverance from impending calamity. The hymn or song is composed of two parts. In the first part (vs. 10—14) Hezekiah describes his feelings and his fears when he was suffering, and especially the apprehension of his mind at the prospect of death; and the second, part (vs. 15—20) expresses praise to God for his goodness.

10. *I said.* Probably the words, "I said" do not imply that he said or spoke this openly, or audibly; but this was the language of his heart; this was the substance of his reflections. ¶ *In the cutting off of my days.* There has been

considerable diversity of interpretation in regard to this phrase. Vitringa renders it as our translators have done. Rosenmüller renders it, "in the meridian of my days." The LXX, ἐν τῇ ὑψει τῶν ἡμερῶν μου, "In the height of my days," where they evidently read בְּרֵי, instead of בְּרִי, by the change of a single letter. Aquila, and the Greek interpreters generally, rendered it, "in the silence of my days." The word here used in Hebrew (רֵי) denotes, properly, stillness, quiet, rest; and Gesenius renders it, "in the quiet of my days." According to him the idea is, "now when I might have rest; when I am delivered from my foes; when I am in the midst of my life, and my reign, and my plans of usefulness, I must die." The sense is, doubtless, that he was about to be cut off in middle life, and when he had every prospect of usefulness, and of happiness in his reign. ¶ *I shall go to the gates of the grave.* Heb., "Gates of Sheol." On the meaning of the word *sheol*, and the Hebrew idea of the descent to it through gates, see Notes on ch. v. 14; xiv. 9. The idea is, that he must die, and go down to the regions of the dead, and dwell with departed shades. See Note on ver. 11. ¶ *The residue of my years.* Those which I had hoped to enjoy; which I had a reasonable prospect of in the ordinary course of events. It is evident that Hezekiah had looked forward to a long life, and to a prosperous and peaceful reign. *This* was the means which God adopted to show him the impropriety of his desire, and to turn him more entirely to his service, and to a preparation for death. Sickness often has this effect on the minds of good men.

11. I said, I shall not see the LORD, *even* the LORD, in <sup>e</sup> the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.

12. Mine age is departed, and

<sup>e</sup> Ps. 27. 13.

is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off <sup>1</sup> with pining sickness: from day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me.

<sup>1</sup> or, from the thrum.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

11. I said, "I shall not see **JEHOVAH**;  
 " **JEHOVAH** in the land of the living;  
 " I shall see man no more,  
 " Among the inhabitants of the land of stillness.  
 12. " My habitation is taken away, and is removed from me like a shepherd's tent;  
 " My life is cut off as by a weaver  
 " Who severeth the web from the loom;  
 " Between the morning and the night thou wilt make an end of me.

11. *I shall not see the LORD.* In the original, the Hebrew which is rendered "LORD" is not **JEHOVAH**, but יהוה, JAH, JAH. On the meaning of it, see Note, ch. xii. 2. Comp. Note, ch. vii.

14. The repetition of the name here denotes *emphasis*, or *intensity of feeling*—the deep desire which he had to see **JEHOVAH** in the land of the living, and the intense sorrow of his heart at the idea of being cut off from that privilege. The idea here is, that Hezekiah felt that he would not be spared to enjoy the tokens of divine favour on earth; to reap the fruits of the surprising and remarkable deliverance from the army of Sennacherib; and to observe its happy results in the augmenting prosperity of the people, and in the complete success of his plans of reformation. ¶ *I shall behold man no more.* I shall see the living no more; I shall die, and go among the dead. He regarded it as a privilege to live, and to enjoy the society of his friends and fellow-worshippers in the temple; a privilege from which he felt that he was about to be cut off. ¶ *With the inhabitants of the world.* Or rather, "amongst the inhabitants of the land of stillness;" that is, of the land of shades, the *Sheol*. He would not there see man as he saw him on earth, living and active, but would be a shade in the

land of shades; himself still in a world of stillness. "I shall be associated with them there, and of course be cut off from the privileges of the society of living men. The Hebrew word rendered world, עוֹלָם, is, from עָלָה, to cease, to leave off, to desist; to become *languid*, *flaccid*, *pendulous*. It then conveys the idea of leaving off, of *resting*, of being still. Job, iii. 17, xiv. 6; Judges, v. 6; Isa. ii. 22. Hence the idea of *frailty*, Ps. xxxix. 5; and hence the word here denotes, probably, the place of rest, the region of the dead, Hades or *Sheol*, and is synonymous with the land of *silence*, such as the grave and the region of the dead are in contradistinction from the hurry and bustle of this world. Our translation seems to have been made as if the word was חַיִּים, life; life-time; hence the world. Ps. xlix. 2, xvii. 14. The Vulgate renders it, "*habitatorem quietis.*" The LXX simply, "I shall behold man no more."

12. *Mine age.* The word חַיִּים, which is here used, means, properly, the revolving period or circle of human life. The parallelism seems to demand, however, that it should be used in the sense of *dwelling*, or habitation, so as to correspond with the "shepherd's tent." Accordingly Lowth and Noyes render it



13. I reckoned till morning, | my bones: from day *even* to night  
*that*, as a lion, so will he break all | wilt thou make an end of me.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

13. "I composed myself until morning;—

"And like a lion did he crush all my bones:

"Between the morning and the night wilt thou make an end of me.

*habitation.* So also do Gesenius and Rosenmüller. The Arabic word has this signification; and the Hebrew verb, דָּוַד, also means *to dwell, to remain*, as in the Chaldee. Here the word means a dwelling, or habitation; that is, a tent, as the habitation of the Orientals were mostly tents. ¶ *Is departed.* נָסַח. The idea here is, that he was to be removed from one place to another; his dwelling was to be transferred, as when a tent or encampment was broken up; that is, he was about to cease to dwell on the earth, and to go and dwell in the land of silence, or among the dead. ¶ *From me as a shepherd's tent.* As suddenly as the tent of a shepherd is taken down, folded up, and transferred to another place. There is, doubtless, the idea here that he would continue to *exist*, but in another place, as the shepherd would pitch his tent or dwell in another place. He was to be cut off from the earth, but he expected to dwell among the dead. The whole passage conveys the idea that he expected to dwell in another state—as the shepherd dwells in another place when he strikes his tent, and it is removed. ¶ *I have cut off like a weaver my life.* This is another image designed to express substantially the same idea. The sense is, as a weaver takes his web from the loom by cutting the warp, or the threads which bind it to the beam, and thus *loosens* it and takes it away, so his life was to be cut off. When it is said, "I cut off," קָטַעְתִּי, the idea is, doubtless, I *am* cut off; or, my life is cut off. Hezekiah here speaks of himself as the agent, because he might have felt that his sins and unworthiness were the cause. Life is often spoken of as a web that is woven, because an advance is constantly made in filling up the web, and because it is

soon finished and is then cut off. ¶ *He will cut me off.* God was about to cut me off. ¶ *With pining sickness.* Marg., "From the thrum." Lowth, "from the loom." The word, נִלְוָה, means, properly, something hanging down or pendulous; anything pliant, or slender. Hence it denotes *hair* or locks. Cant. vii. 6. Here it seems to denote the *threads* or *thrums* which tied the web to the weaver's beam. The image here denotes the cutting off of life as the weaver cuts his web out of the loom, or as he cuts off thrums. The word never means sickness. ¶ *From day even to night, &c.* That is, in the space of a single day, or between morning and night—as a weaver with a short web accomplishes it in a single day. The disease of Hezekiah was doubtless the pestilence; and the idea is, that God would cut him off speedily, as it were in a single day. ¶ *Wilt thou make an end of me.* Heb. Wilt thou perfect me, or *finish* me; that is, wilt thou take my life.

13. *I reckoned, &c.* There has been considerable variety in interpreting this expression. The LXX render it, "I was given up in the morning as to a lion," &c. The Vulgate renders it, "I hoped until morning;" and in his commentary, Jerome says it means, that as Job, in his trouble and anguish (vii. 4), sustained himself at night expecting the day, and in the day time waiting for the night, expecting a change for the better, so Hezekiah waited during the night expecting relief in the morning. He knew, says he, that the violence of a burning fever would very soon subside, and he thus composed himself, and calmly waited. So Vitringa renders it, I composed my mind until the morning. Others suppose that the word here used, נִלְוָה, means, "I made myself like a

14. Like a crane *or* a swallow,  
so did I chatter: I did mourn <sup>as</sup>  
a dove: mine eyes fail *with look-*

f ch. 59. 11.

*ing upward*: O LORD, I am oppressed; <sup>1</sup> undertake for me.

<sup>1</sup> or, ease me.

# NEW TRANSLATION.

14. "Like a crane *or* a swallow so did I twitter;

"I did mourn like a dove:

"Mine eyes became weak with looking upward.

"O JEHOVAH! I am in distress. Be thou surety for me."

lion," that is, in roaring. But the more probable and generally adopted interpretation is, "I looked to God, hoping that the disease would soon subside, *but* as a lion he crushed my bones. The disease increased in violence, and became past endurance. *Then* I chattered like a swallow, and mourned like a dove, over the certainty that I must die."—Our translators, by inserting the word "*that*," have greatly marred the sense, as if he had *reckoned* or *calculated* through the night that God *would* break his bones, or increase the violence of the disease, whereas the reverse was true. He hoped and expected that it would be otherwise, and with that view he composed his mind. ¶ *As a lion, so will he break all my bones.* This should be in the past tense. "He [God] *did* crush all my bones." The connexion requires this construction. The idea is, that as a lion crushes the bones of his prey, producing great pain and sudden death, so it was with God in producing great pain and the prospect of sudden death. ¶ *From day even to night, &c.* Note ver. 12. Between morning and night. That is, his pain was so great; so resembling the crushing of all the bones of an animal by the lion, that he could not hope to survive the day.

14. *Like a crane.* The word used here (ער) denotes usually a *horse*. The Rabbins render it here a *crane*. Gesenius translates it a *swallow*; and in his Lexicon interprets the word which is translated a swallow (צפר) to mean *circling*, flying in circles, making gyrations; and the whole phrase, "*as the circling swallow*." The Syriac renders this "*as the chattering swallow*." The

Vulgate, "*as the young of the swallow*." The LXX simply "*as the swallow*." That two birds are intended here, or that some fowl is denoted by the word צפר, is manifest from Jer. viii. 7, where it is mentioned as distinct from the ער—the crane—עורסא. On the meaning of the words Bochart may be consulted. Hieroz. lib. i. t. ii. p. 602. It is probable that the swallow and the crane are intended. The swallow is well known, and is remarkable for its twittering. The crane is also a well known bird, with long limbs, made to go in the water. Its noise may be expressive of grief. ¶ *So did I chatter.* Peep, or twitter. See Note on ch. viii. 19. The idea here, is doubtless that of pain that was expressed in sounds resembling that made by birds; a broken, unmeaning, unintelligible sighing; or quick breathing, and moaning. ¶ *I did mourn as a dove.* The dove, from its plaintive sound, is an emblem of grief. It is so used in ch. lix. 11. The idea is that of the *lonely* or *solitary* dove that is lamenting or mourning for its companion.

Just as the lonely dove laments its mate.

¶ *Mine eyes fail.* The word here used (נחל) means, properly, to hang down, to swing like the branches of the willow; then, to be languid, feeble, weak. Applied to the eye, it means that it languishes and becomes weak. ¶ *With looking upward.* To God, for relief and comfort. He had looked so long, and so intensely toward heaven for aid, that his eyes became weak and feeble. ¶ *O LORD. I am oppressed.* This was his language in his affliction.

15. What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.

16. O LORD, by these *things* men <sup>s</sup> live, and in all these *things* is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.

g Matt. 4. 4.

NEW TRANSLATION.

15. What can I say?

He promised, and he hath done it.

I will walk humbly all my years,

On account of the bitterness of my soul.

16. O Lord! it is thus men live;

And thus altogether is the life of my spirit.

Thou hast recovered me, and caused me to live.

He was so oppressed and borne down that he cried to God for relief. ¶ *Undertake for me.* Marg., *ease me.* The word (קָרָא) more properly means, to *become surety* for him. See it explained in the Note on ch. xxxvi. 8. Here it means, be surety for my life; give assurance that I shall be restored; take me under thy protection. See Ps. cxix. 122. "Be surety for thy servant for good."

15. *What shall I say?* This language seems to denote surprise and gratitude, at unexpected deliverance. It is the language of a heart that is overflowing, and that wants words to express its deep emotions. In the previous verse he had described his pain, anguish, and despair. In this he records the sudden and surprising deliverance which God had granted; which was so great, that no words could express his sense of it. Nothing could be more natural than this language; nothing more appropriately express the feelings of a man who had been suddenly restored to health from dangerous sickness, and brought from the borders of the grave. ¶ *He hath both spoken unto me.* That is, he has promised. So the word is often used. Deut. xxvi. 17; Jer. iii. 19. He had made the promise by the instrumentality of Isaiah, ver. 5, 6. The promise related to his recovery, to the length of his days, and to his entire deliverance from the hands of the Assyrians. ¶ *And himself hath done it.* He himself has restored me according to his promise, when no one

else could have done it. ¶ *I shall go softly.* Lowth renders this, in accordance with the Vulgate, "Will I reflect." But the Hebrew will not bear this construction. The word here used (יָדַד) occurs in but one other place in the Bible. Ps. xlii. 4. "I went with them to the house of God;" i. e. I went with them in a sacred procession to the house of God; I went with a solemn, calm, slow pace. The idea here is, "I will go humbly, submissively, all my life; I will walk in a serious manner, remembering that I am travelling to the grave; I will avoid pride, pomp, and display; I will suffer the remembrance of my sickness and of God's mercy to produce a calm, serious, thoughtful demeanor all my life." This is the proper effect of sickness on a pious mind, and it is its usual effect. And probably one design of God was to keep Hezekiah from the ostentatious parade usually attendant on his lofty station; from being elated with his deliverance from the Assyrian; from improper celebrations of that deliverance by revelry and pomp; and to keep him in remembrance that though he was a monarch, yet he was a mortal man, and that he held his life at the disposal of God. ¶ *In the bitterness of my soul.* I will remember the deep distress; the bitter sorrows of my sickness, and my surprising recovery; and will allow the remembrance of that to diffuse seriousness and gratitude over all my life.

16. O LORD, by these things men live.

17. Behold, <sup>1</sup> for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast <sup>2</sup> in love to my soul *delivered it* from the pit <sup>h</sup> of corruption: for

thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

18. For the grave <sup>i</sup> cannot praise thee, death can *not* celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

<sup>1</sup> or, on my peace came.

<sup>2</sup> loved my soul from the pit. h Ps. 40. 2.

i Ps. 6. 5.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

17. Lo! instead of peace I had great anguish.  
But thou in love hast recovered my soul from the pit of destruction;  
For thou hast cast all my sins behind my back.
18. For Sheol cannot praise thee;  
Death cannot celebrate thee;  
They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

The design of this and the following verses is evidently to set forth the goodness of God, and to celebrate his praise for what he had done. The phrase, "these things," refers evidently to the promises of God and their fulfilment; and the idea is, that men are sustained in the land of the living only by such gracious interpositions as he had experienced. It was not because men had any power of preserving their own lives, but because God interposed in time of trouble; sustained in times of sickness; and restored to health when there was no human prospect that they could recover. ¶ *And in all these things.* In these promises, and in the divine interposition. ¶ *Is the life of my spirit.* I am alive in virtue only of these things. ¶ *So wilt thou recover me.* Or, so hast thou recovered me; that is, thou hast restored me to health.

17. *Behold, for peace.* That is, instead of the health, happiness, and prosperity which I had enjoyed, and which I hope still to enjoy. ¶ *I had great bitterness.* Heb., "Bitterness to me, bitterness;" an emphatic expression denoting intense sorrow. ¶ *But thou hast in love to my soul, &c.* Marg., "loved my soul from the pit." The word which occurs here (*עָרַב*) denotes properly to join, or fasten together; then to be attached to any one; to be united tenderly; to embrace. Here it means that God had loved him;

and had thus delivered his soul from death. ¶ *Delivered it from the pit of corruption.* The word rendered corruption, *חָרַב*, denotes consumption, destruction, perdition. It may be applied to the grave, or to the deep and dark abode of departed spirits; and the phrase here is evidently synonymous with *Sheol*, or *Hades*. The grave, or the place for the dead, is often represented as a *pit*—deep and dark—to which the living descend. Job xvii. 16, xxxiii. 18, 24, 28, 30; Ps. xxviii. 1, xxx. 3, lv. 23, lxix. 15, lxxxviii. 4. Comp. Note, Isa. xiv. 15, 19. ¶ *For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.* Thou hast forgiven them; hast ceased to punish me on account of them. This shows that Hezekiah, in accordance with the sentiment everywhere felt and expressed in the Bible, regarded his suffering as the fruit of sin.

18. *For the grave cannot praise thee.* The Hebrew word here is *Sheol*. It is put by metonymy here for those who are in the grave, that is, for the dead. The word *praise* here refers evidently to the public and solemn celebration of the goodness of God; or to such kind of praise as Hezekiah desired to offer. It is clear, I think, that Hezekiah had a belief in a future state, or that he expected to dwell with "the inhabitants of the land of silence" (ver. 11.) when he died. But he did not regard that state

19. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father <sup>k</sup> to the children shall make known thy truth.

20. The LORD *was ready* to save me: therefore we will sing  
<sup>k</sup> Ps. 78. 3. 4.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

19. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day;  
 The father to the children shall make known thy faithfulness.

20. JEHOVAH was for my salvation;  
 And upon my stringed instruments will we sing,  
 All the days of our life,  
 In the house of JEHOVAH.

21. Now Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay them softened

as one adapted to the celebration of the public praises of God. It was a land of darkness; an abode of silence and stillness; a place where there was no temple, and no public praise such as he had been accustomed to. A similar sentiment is expressed by David in Ps. vi. 5.

For in death there is no remembrance of thee;  
 In the grave who shall give thee thanks?

In regard to the Jewish conceptions of the state of the dead, see Notes on ch. xiv. 15, 19. ¶ *Cannot hope for thy truth.* They are shut out from all the means by which thy truth is brought to the mind, and the offers of salvation are presented. Their probation is at an end; their privileges are closed; their destiny is sealed up. The idea is, it is a privilege to live because this is a world where the offers of salvation are made, and where those who are conscious of guilt may hope in the mercy of God.

19. *The living, the living.* An emphatic or intensive form of expression, as in vs. 11—17. Nothing would express his idea but a repetition of the word, as if the heart was full of it. ¶ *He shall praise thee.* Shall celebrate thy goodness and mercy in the temple, or in songs of praise. ¶ *The father to the children.* One generation of the living to another. The father shall

have so deep a sense of the goodness of God, that he shall desire to make it known to his children, and to perpetuate the memory of it in the earth.

20. *The LORD was ready to save me.* He was prompt, quick to save me. He did not hesitate or delay. ¶ *Therefore will we sing my songs.* Or, my family and nation. The song of Hezekiah was designed evidently not as a mere record, but to be used in celebrating the praises of God, and probably in a public manner in the temple. The restoration of the monarch was a fit occasion for public rejoicing; and it is probable that he composed this ode to be used by the company of singers that were employed constantly in the temple. ¶ *To the stringed instruments.* We will set it to music, and will use it publicly. See Notes on ch. v.

21. *For Isaiah had said.* In the parallel place in Kings the statement in these two verses is introduced before the account of the miracle on the sundial, and before the account of his recovery. 2 Kings xx. 7, 8. The order in which it is introduced, however, is not material. ¶ *Let them take a lump of figs.* The word here used, קִיָּה, denotes a round cake of dried figs pressed together in a mass. 1 Sam. xxv. 18. Figs were thus pressed together for preservation, and for convenience of

22. Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house<sup>1</sup> of the LORD?

Ps. 84. 2.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

1. At<sup>a</sup> that time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of  
a 2 Kings 20. 12, &c.

### NEW TRANSLATION.

22. on the ulcer; and he shall recover. Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of JEHOVAH?

1. At that time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan king of Babylon, sent letters, and a present to Hezekiah, for he had heard that he had

conveyance. ¶ *And lay it for a plaster.* The word here used, *רָפָה*, denotes, properly, to rub, bruise, crush by rubbing; then, to rub in, to anoint, to soften. Here it means they were to take dried figs and lay them softened on the ulcer. ¶ *Upon the boil.* *רָפָה*. This word means a burning sore or an inflamed ulcer. Ex. ix. 9, 11; Lev. xiii. 18—20. The verb in Arabic means to be hot, inflamed; to ulcerate. The noun is used to denote a species of black leprosy in Egypt called Elephantiasis, distinguished by the black scales with which the skin is covered, and by the swelling of the legs. Here it probably denotes a pestilential boil; an eruption, or inflamed ulceration produced by the plague, that threatened immediate death. Jerome says that the plaster of figs was medicinal, and adapted to reduce the inflammation, and restore health. There is no improbability in the supposition; nor does anything in the narrative prohibit us from supposing that natural means might have been used adapted to restore him. The miracle consisted in the arrest of the shade on the sun-dial, and in the announcement of Isaiah that he would recover. That figs when dried were used in the *Materia Medica* of the ancients is asserted by both Pliny and Celsus. See Pliny, Nat. Hist. xxiii. 7; Celsus, v. 2, quoted by Lowth.

22 Hezekiah also had said, &c. What evidence, or proof have I that I shall be restored, and permitted to go to the temple of God? The miracle on the sun-dial was wrought in answer to this request, and as a demonstration that he should yet be permitted to visit the temple of God. See Note on ver. 7.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### ANALYSIS.

This short chapter completes the historical part of Isaiah. The same record occurs, with some slight changes, in 2 Kings xx. 12—21. Comp. the Introduction to ch. xxxvi. The chapter is composed of the following parts. (1.) The statement that the king of Babylon sent an embassy to Hezekiah to congratulate him on his recovery, ver. 1. This embassy contemplated also an inquiry into the truth of the report in regard to the miracle on the sun-dial, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. (2.) Hezekiah showed them all his treasures in an ostentatious and improper manner, ver. 2. This was permitted, in order that he might be tried, and might know all that was in his own heart, and not be lifted up with pride, and with the conviction of his own righteousness. 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. (3.) Isaiah is sent with a message to Hezekiah to inquire what he had done, and who those ambassadors were, vs. 4, 5. (4.) Isaiah is directed to deliver the solemn message of God that Jerusalem should be taken; and that all its inhabitants and all its treasures should be carried to Babylon—the place whence those ambassadors came, vs. 5—7. (5.) Hezekiah expresses submission to the just sentence and purpose of God, and gratitude that it should not occur in his days, ver. 8.

1 At that time. That is, soon after his recovery, or after he had amassed great wealth, and was surrounded with the evidences of prosperity. 2 Chron. xxxii. 27—31. ¶ *Merodach-baladan,*

Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered.

the son of Baladan, king of Babylon. In the parallel place in 2 Kings xx. 12, this name is written Berodach-baladan, by a change of a single letter. Probably the name was written and pronounced both ways. Merodach was an idol of the Babylonians, Jer. l. 2. "Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is confounded." This idol, according to Gesenius, was probably the planet *Mars*, or the god Mars, the god of war. To this god, as the god of blood and slaughter, as well as to Saturn, the ancient Semitic nations offered human sacrifices. See Gesenius's *Lex.* and *Comm.* in loco. The word *Baladan* is also a compound word, and means *Bel is his lord*. The name of this idol *Merodach* is often incorporated into the proper names of kings, and of others. Thus we have the names Evil-Merodach, Messi-Mordachus, Sisi-mordachus, Mardocentes, &c. In regard to the statement of Isaiah in this verse, no small degree of difficulty has been felt by commentators, and it is not until quite recently that the difficulty has been removed; and it has been done in a manner to furnish an additional and most striking demonstration of the entire and minute accuracy of the sacred narrative. The difficulty arose from several circumstances. (1.) This king of Babylon makes no other appearance in sacred history, and is nowhere else mentioned. (2.) The kingdom of Assyria was yet flourishing, and Babylon was one of its dependencies. For, only nine years before, Shalmaneser the Assyrian monarch is said to have transported the inhabitants of Babylon to other parts, (2 Kings xvii. 24) and Manasseh, not many years after, was carried captive to Babylon by the king of Assyria. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11. These instances incontestably prove that at the time of Hezekiah Babylon was dependent on the Assyrian kings. Who then, it is asked, was this Merodach-baladan king of Babylon? If he was governor of that city, how could he

send an embassy of congratulation to the Jewish sovereign then at war with his liege lord? The canon of Ptolemy gives us no king of this name, nor does his chronology appear reconcilable with sacred history.

In this darkness and doubt, says Dr. Wiseman, we must have continued, and the apparent contradiction of this text to other passages would have remained inexplicable, had not the progress of modern Oriental study brought to light a document of the most venerable antiquity. This is nothing less than a fragment of Berosus, preserved in the chronicle of Eusebius. This interesting fragment informs us, that after Sennacherib's brother had governed Babylon, as Assyrian viceroy, Acises unjustly possessed himself of the supreme command. After thirty days he was murdered by Merodach-baladan, who usurped the sovereignty for six months, when he was in turn killed, and was succeeded by Elibus. But after three years, Sennacherib collected an army, gave the usurper battle, conquered, and took him prisoner. Having once more reduced Babylon to his obedience, he left his son Assordan, the Essarhaddon of Scripture, as governor of the city.

The only objection to this statement, or to the entire consistency of this fragment with the Scripture narrative is, that Isaiah relates the murder of Sennacherib, and the succession of Esarhaddon before Merodach-baladan's embassy to Jerusalem. But to this Gesenius has well replied, that this arrangement is followed by the prophet in order to conclude the history of the Assyrian monarch, which has no further connexion with the subject, so as not to return to it again.

By this order also the prophecy of his murder is more closely connected with the history of its fulfilment. Isa. xxxvii. 7; comp. ver. 38. And this solution, which supposed some interval to have elapsed between Sennacherib's

2. And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his <sup>1</sup> precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the

house of his <sup>2</sup> armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

<sup>1</sup> or, *spicery*.

<sup>2</sup> *vessels, or, instruments, or, jewels*

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

2. been sick, and was recovered. And Hezekiah was rejoiced with them; and he showed them his treasure-house, the silver, and the gold, and the aromatics, and the precious ointment, and his whole armory, and all that was found in his treasures. There was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, which Hezekiah did not show them.

return to Nineveh, and his death, is rendered probable by the words of the text itself. "He went and returned, and dwelt in Nineveh; and it came to pass," &c. Isa. xxxvii. 37, 38.

Thus we have it certainly explained how there was a king, or rather a usurper in Babylon at the time when it was really a provincial city of the Assyrian empire. Nothing was more probable than that Merodach-baladan, having seized the throne, should endeavour to unite himself in league and amity with the enemies of his master, against whom he had revolted. Hezekiah, who, no less than himself, had thrown off the Assyrian yoke, and was in powerful alliance with the king of Egypt, would be his first resource. No embassy, on the other hand, could be more welcome to the Jewish monarch who had the common enemy in his neighbourhood, and who would be glad to see a division made in his favour by a rebellion in the very heart of that enemy's kingdom. Hence arose that excessive attention which he paid to the envoys of the usurper, and which so offended Isaiah, or rather God, who, as a consequence, threatened the Babylonian captivity. See Dr. Wiseman's Lectures on Science and Revealed Religion, pp. 369—371. Ed. And. 1837. ¶ *Sent letters.* The LXX add, "and ambassadors," καὶ πρεσβυτεῖς. ¶ *And a present.* It was customary, as is well known, among the Orientals, as it is now, to send a valuable present when one prince sent an embassy for any pur-

pose to another. It is stated in 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, that one object of their coming was to make inquiry "of the wonder that was done in the land;" that is, of the miracle in regard to the retrocession of the shadow on the sundial of Ahaz. It is well known, that from the earliest periods the Babylonians and Chaldeans were distinguished for their attention to astronomy. Indeed, as a science, astronomy was first cultivated on the plains of Chaldea; and there the knowledge of that science was scarcely surpassed by any of the ancient nations. The report which they had heard of this miracle would, therefore, be to them a matter of deep interest as an astronomical fact, and they came to make inquiry into the exact truth of the report.

2. *And Hezekiah was glad of them.* Possibly he regarded himself as flattered by an embassy from so great a distance, and so celebrated a place as Babylon. It is certain that he erred in some way in regard to the manner in which he received them, and especially in the ostentatious display which he made of his treasures. 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. ¶ *And shewed them the house of his precious things.* The LXX render this, "the house of Nechotha," νεχωθα, retaining the Hebrew word. The margin renders it "spicery." The Hebrew word נְכוּתָה properly means, according to Gesenius, a contusion, a breaking to pieces; hence *aromatic powder*, spices reduced to powder; and then, any kind



3 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, *even* from Babylon.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What did these men say? and from whence did they come unto thee? And Hezekiah said, From a distant country they came unto me, from

of aromatics. Hence the word here may mean, "the house of his spices," as Aquila, Symm., and the Vulgate, translate it; or, a treasury, a storehouse, as the Chaldee and the Syriac here render it. It was undoubtedly a treasure or storehouse; but it may have taken its name from the fact, that it was mainly employed as a place in which to keep spices, unguents, and the various kinds of aromatics which were used either in public worship, or for the purposes of luxury. ¶ *The silver, and the gold.* Possibly Hezekiah may have obtained no small quantity of silver and gold from what was left in the camp of the Assyrians. It is certain that after he was delivered from danger he was signally prospered, and became one of the most wealthy and magnificent monarchs of the east. 2 Chron. xxxii. 27, 28. "And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour; and he made himself treasures for silver and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels; storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks." A considerable part of this wealth arose from presents which were made to him, and from gifts which were made for the service of the temple, 2 Chron. xxxii. 23. ¶ *And the precious ointment.* Used for anointing kings and priests. Or, more probably, the ointment here referred to was that which was in more common use, to anoint the body after bathing, or when they were to appear in public. ¶ *And all the house of his armour. Marg., vessels, or instruments, or jewels.* The word *בְּרִי* denotes any article of furniture, utensil, or vessel;

any trapping, instrument, or tool; and any implement of war, weapon, or arms. Probably it here refers to the latter, and denotes shields, swords, spears, such as were used in war, and such as Hezekiah had prepared for defence. The phrase is equivalent to our word *arsenal*. Comp. 2 Chron. xxxii. 27. Solomon had an extensive arsenal of this description, (1 Kings x. 16, 17,) and it is probable that these were regarded as a part of the necessary defence of the kingdom. ¶ *Nor in all his dominion.* Everything that contributed to the defence, the wealth, or the magnificence of his kingdom heshowed to them. The purpose for which Hezekiah thus showed them all that he had, was evidently display. In 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, it is stated that "Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up;" and in ver. 31 it is said, that in regard to this transaction, "God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart." The result showed how much God hates pride, and how certainly he will punish all forms of ostentation.

3. *Then came Isaiah.* Isaiah was accustomed to declare the will of God most freely to monarchs. See ch. vii. ¶ *What said these men?* What proposition have they made? What is the design of their coming?—It is implied in the question that there had been some improper communication from them. To this question Hezekiah returned no answer. ¶ *And from whence came they?* &c. It was doubtless known in Jerusalem that ambassadors had come, but it would not be likely to be known from what country they had come. ¶ *From a far country.* Probably this was

4. Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my <sup>b</sup> treasures that I have not shewed them.

5. Then said Isaiah to Heze-

kiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts:

6. Behold, the days <sup>c</sup> come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried <sup>d</sup> to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.

<sup>c</sup> Jer. 20. 5.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Kings 25, 6, &c.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

4. Babylon. And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah said, All that is in my house they have seen. There is nothing  
5. in my treasures which I have not showed them. And Isaiah said to  
6. Hezekiah, Hear the word of JEHOVAH of hosts. Lo! the days come, when all that is in thine house, which thy fathers have treasured up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, saith

said in order to palliate and excuse his conduct by intimating to the prophet that it was proper to show respectful attention to foreigners, and that he had done nothing more than was demanded by the laws of hospitality and kindness.

4. *What have they seen?* It is probable that the fact that Hezekiah had showed them the treasures of his kingdom was known in Jerusalem. Such a fact would be likely to attract attention, and to produce inquiry among the people into the cause. ¶ *All that is in mine house, &c.* Here was the confession of a frank, an honest, and a pious man. There was no concealment; no disguise. Hezekiah knew that he was dealing with a man of God—a man, too, to whom he had been under great obligations. He knew that Isaiah had come commissioned by God, and that it would be in vain to attempt to conceal anything. Nor does he seem to have wished to conceal anything. If he was conscious that what he had done had been improper, he was willing to confess it; and at any rate he was willing that the exact truth should be known. Had Hezekiah been like Ahaz, he might have spurned Isaiah from his presence, as presenting improper inquiries. But Hezekiah was accustomed to regard with respect the messengers of God; and he was therefore willing to

submit his whole conduct to the divine adjudication and reproof. Piety makes a man honest, and willing that all that he has done should be known. It saves him from double dealing, and subterfuges, and a disposition to make vain excuses; and it inclines him to fear God, to respect his ambassadors, and to listen to the voice of eternal truth.

5. *Hear the word of the Lord of hosts.* Hear what the Mighty God that rules in heaven says of this. This is an instance of great fidelity on the part of the prophet. He felt himself sent from God in a solemn manner to rebuke sin in a monarch, and a pious monarch. It is an instance that strikingly resembles the boldness and faithfulness of Nathan when he went to David, and said, "Thou art the man." 2 Sam. xii. 7.

6. *Behold, the days come.* The captivity of the Jews in Babylon commenced about one hundred and twenty years after this prediction. Comp Jer. xx. 5. ¶ *That all that is in thine house.* That is, all the treasures that are in the treasure-house, ver. 2. ¶ *And that which thy fathers have laid up in store, &c.* In 2 Kings xviii. 15, 16, we are told that Hezekiah, in order to meet the demands of the king of Assyria, had cut off even the ornaments of the temple, and taken all the treasures

7. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and <sup>c</sup> they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

: fulfilled, Dan. i. 2-7.

8. Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, <sup>f</sup> Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.

f 1 Sam. 3 18.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

- 7 JEHOVAH. And of thy sons which shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, they shall take, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of 8. the king of Babylon. And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, Good is the word of JEHOVAH which thou hast spoken. For, said he, there shall be peace and truth in my days.

which were in "the king's house." It is possible, however, that there might have been other treasures which had been accumulated by the kings before him which he had not touched. ¶ *Nothing shall be left.* This was literally fulfilled. See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 18. It is remarkable, says Vitringa, that this is the first intimation that the Jews would be carried to Babylon—the first designation of the *place* where they would be so long punished and oppressed. Micah (iv. 10), a contemporary of Isaiah, declares the same thing, but probably this was not before the declaration here made by Isaiah. Moses had declared repeatedly, that if they were a rebellious people, they should be removed from their own to a foreign land; but he had not designated the country. Lev. xxvi. 33, 34; Deut. xxviii. 64-67; xxx. 3. Abijah, in the time of Jeroboam (1 Kings xiv. 15), had predicted that they should be carried "beyond the river," i. e., the Euphrates; and Amos (v. 27), had said that God would carry them "into captivity beyond Damascus." But all these predictions were now concentrated on Babylon; and it was for the first time distinctly announced by Isaiah that that was to be the land where they were to suffer so long and so painful a captivity.

7. *And of thy sons.* Thy posterity. See Note, Matt. i. 1. ¶ *Which shall issue from thee.* Of the royal family. The captivity at Babylon occurred more than a hundred years after this, and of course those who were carried there

were somewhat remote descendants of Hezekiah. ¶ *And they shall be eunuchs.* The word here used, קְרָסִים, *sārīsīm*, denotes properly and strictly, eunuchs, or such persons as were accustomed to attend on the harems of Oriental monarchs. Est. ii. 3, 14, 15. These persons were also employed often in various offices of the court (Est. i. 10, 12, 15), and hence the word often means a minister of court, a court-officer, though not literally an eunuch. Gen. xxxvii. 36; xxxix. 1. It is not easy, however, to tell when the word is to be understood literally, and when not. The Targum understands it of those who should be *nurtured*, or who should become great in the kingdom of Babylon. That the Jews were advanced to some offices of trust and power in Babylon, is evident from the case of Daniel, i. 2-7. It is by no means improbable, also, that the king of Babylon would have a pride in having among the attendants at his court, or even over the harem, the descendants of the once magnificent monarchs of the Jews.

8. *Good is the word of the LORD, &c* The sense of this is, "I acquiesce in this; I perceive that it is right; I see in it evidence of benevolence and goodness." The grounds of his acquiescence seem to have been, (1.) the fact that he saw that it was just. He felt that he had sinned; that he had been proud, and ostentatious; that he had made an improper display of his treasures, and that he deserved to be punished. (2.) He

felt that the sentence was mild, and merciful. It was less than he deserved; and less than he had reason to expect. (3.) It was merciful to *him*, and to his kingdom at that time. God was not coming forth to cut him off; or to involve him in any more calamity. (4.) His own reign and life were to be full of mercy still. He had abundant cause of gratitude, therefore, that God was dealing with him in so much kindness. It cannot be shown that Hezekiah was regardless of his posterity, or unconcerned at the calamity which would come upon them. All that the passage fairly implies is, that he saw that it was right; and that it was proof of great mercy in God that the punishment was deferred, and was not, as in the case of David, (2 Sam. xxiv. 13, 14, &c.,) to be inflicted in his own time. The nature of the crime of Hezekiah is more fully stated in the parallel passage in the Book of Chronicles, xxxii. 25, 26, 30, 31. ¶ *For there shall be peace.* I am not threatened with war. My kingdom shall not be disturbed during my reign with a foreign invasion. ¶ *And truth.* The truth of God shall be maintained; his worship shall be kept up; his name shall be honoured. ¶ *In my days.* During my reign. He inferred this because Isaiah had said (ver. 7) that *his posterity* would be carried to Babylon. He was assured, therefore, that these calamities would not come in his own time. We may

learn from this, (1.) That we should submit to God when he punishes us. If we have right feelings we shall always see that we deserve all that we are called to suffer. (2.) In the midst of severest judgments we may find *some* evidence of mercy. Judgment is tempered with kindness. There are *some* considerations on which the mind may fix, that will console it with the evidence of the compassion of God, and that will not only make it submissive, but fill it with gratitude. (3.) We should accustom ourselves to such views of the divine dealings, and should *desire* to find in them the evidence of goodness and mercy, and not the evidence of wrath and severity. It is of infinite importance that we should cherish right views of God, and should believe that he is holy, good, and merciful. To do this, we should feel that we deserve *all* that we suffer; we should look at what we *might* have endured; we should look at the mercies *spared* to us, as well as at those which are *taken away*; and we should hold to the belief as an unwavering principle, from which we are never to depart, that God is *good, SUPREME AND WHOLLY GOOD*. Then our minds will have peace. Then, with Hezekiah, we may say, "Good is the word of JEHOVAH." Then, with the suffering Redeemer of the world, we may always say, "Not my will, but *THINE BE DONE*." Luke xxii. 42.

## THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTERS XL.—LXVI.

It is admitted, on all hands, that the second part of Isaiah, comprising the prophecies which commence at the fortieth chapter, and which continue to the end of the book, is to be regarded as the most sublime, and to us the most important, part of the Old Testament. No writings contain passages of greater elegance and of higher sublimity than this portion of Isaiah. In the previous portions of his prophecies, there was much that was local and temporary. Indeed, all, or nearly all, that occurs from ch. i. to ch. xxxix. had direct and immediate reference to the times in which the prophet lived, or was suggested by the events which occurred in those times. Not unfrequently, indeed, there were prophecies respecting the Messiah's coming (ch. ii. iv. vii. ix. xi. xxxv.), but the primary reference was to events that were then occurring, or which were soon to occur, and which were local in their character. There the prophet dwells much on the character of the nation, as, e. g., ch. i. iii.; on the invasion of the land by the united armies of Syria and Samaria, ch. vii.; on the invasion by Sennacherib, ch. viii. x., &c.; on the condition of Damascus, Tyre, Egypt, Babylon, Moab, &c. And though the mind of the prophet is carried forward by the laws of prophetic suggestion, (see Introduction, § 7, 5,) and he describes the times of the Messiah, yet the immediate and primary reference of those prophecies is to events which were then occurring, or soon to occur; and to Judea, or to the kingdoms and countries in the vicinity of Judea, with which the Jews were in various ways connected.

In this portion of the prophecy, however, there is little that is local and temporary. It is wholly occupied with a description of events which were to occur long after the time of the prophet, and which should be of interest, not only to the Jewish nation, but to

the whole human family. It is a beautiful and glowing description of occurrences in which men of these times, and of all subsequent times, will have as deep an interest as they who have lived at any former period. Indeed, it is not improbable, that as the world advances in age, the interest in this portion of Isaiah will increase; and that as the gospel is carried around the globe, and the earth comes under its influence, the beauty and accuracy of these descriptions will be more clearly seen, and more highly appreciated; and that nations will yet derive their highest consolations, and see the clearest proof of the inspiration of the sacred volume, from the entire correspondence between this portion of Isaiah and the future events which are yet to gladden the world. There is no portion of the Old Testament where there is so graphic and clear a description of the times of the Messiah. None of the other prophets linger so long, and with such apparent delight, on the promised coming of the Prince of Peace; on his character and work; on the nature of his instructions, and the manner of his reception; on the trials of his life, and the painful circumstances of his death; on the dignity of his nature, and on his lowly and humble manner of life; on the prevalence of his religion, and on its transforming and happy effects; on the consolations which he would furnish, and on the fact that his religion would bear light and joy around the world.

Lowth supposes that this prophecy was uttered in the latter part of the reign of Hezekiah. A more probable supposition is that of Hengstenberg, that it was uttered in the times of Manasseh. I have endeavoured to show (Introduction, § 2) that Isaiah lived some time during the reign of Manasseh. According to this supposition, there was probably an interval of some twelve or fourteen years between the close of the predictions in the first part, and those which occupy this portion of the book. Manasseh was a cruel prince, and his reign was a cruel reign. (See Introduction, § 3.) It was a time of the prevalence of idolatry and sin. In this state of things, it is probable that Isaiah, who was then of great age, withdrew almost or quite entirely from the public functions of the prophetic work, and sought personal consolation, and endeavoured to furnish consolation for the pious portion of the nation, in the contemplation of future times. In this period, I suppose, this

portion of the prophecy was conceived and penned. Isaiah, in the close of the previous part of the prophecies (ch. xxxix. 7), had distinctly announced that the nation should be carried to Babylon. He saw that this was inevitable, and that the crimes of the monarch and of the nation were such as would certainly hasten this result. He had retired from the public functions of the prophetic office, and given himself up to the contemplation of happier and purer times. He therefore devoted himself to the task of furnishing consolation for the pious portion of the nation, and especially of recording prophetic descriptions which should comfort the Jews when they should be held in their long captivity in Babylon. We have seen (notes on ch. xiii. and xiv.) that Isaiah had before this laid the foundation for these consolations by the assurance that Babylon and its mighty power should be entirely destroyed, and, of course, that the Jewish people could not be held *always* in bondage there. In this part of the prophecy (ch. xl.—lxvi.) his object is to give more full and specific consolations. He therefore places himself in vision, (see Intro. § 7, 4,) in the midst of the future scenes which he describes, and states distinctly and fully the grounds of consolation. These topics of consolation would arise from two sources, both of which he presents at great length, and with great beauty. The first is, that the nation should be delivered from its long and painful captivity. This was the *primary* thing to be done, and this was needful, in order to furnish to them consolation. He places himself in that future time. He sees his own nation borne to a distant land, according to his own predictions; sees them sighing in their hard bondage; sees the city and the temple where they once worshipped the God of their fathers laid in ruins, and all their pleasant things laid waste, (ch. lxiv. 11;) and the people dispirited and sad in their long and painful captivity. He predicts the close of that captivity, and speaks of it as present to his view. He consoles the people by the assurance that it was coming to an end; names the monarch, Cyrus, by whom their oppressors were to be punished, and by whom they were to be restored to their own land, and describes, in the most beautiful and glowing imagery, their certain return. The second source of consolation is that which relates to the coming of a far more important deliverer than Cyrus, and to a far more important

deliverance than that from the captivity at Babylon. By the laws of prophetic suggestion, and in accordance with the usual manner of Isaiah, his mind is carried forward to much more momentous events. His thoughts glide easily to the Messiah; and any event which bears *a resemblance* to his coming, suggests his work, his character, and the benefit of his advent, and the descriptions of the prophet insensibly change from the immediate subject under contemplation to the far more important events connected with his work. This was the common rule by which the mind of Isaiah acted; and it is no wonder, therefore, that an event so strikingly resembling the deliverance of man from the bondage of sin by the Messiah as was the deliverance from the captivity of Babylon, should have been suggested by that, and that his thoughts should pass rapidly from one to the other, and the one be forgotten in the other. The eye of the prophet, therefore, glances rapidly from the object more immediately in view in the future to the object more remote; and he regards the deliverance from the Babylonish captivity as introductory to a far more important deliverance. In the contemplation of that more distant event, therefore, he becomes wholly absorbed, and from this he derives his main topics of consolation. He sees the future coming of the Messiah; he sees his forerunner; he sees the author of redemption in various scenes—now as a sufferer, humble, poor, and persecuted; and now the more distant glories of the Messiah's kingdom rise to view. He sees him raised up from the dead; he sees his empire extend and spread among the Gentiles; he sees kings and princes from all lands coming to lay their offerings at his feet; he sees the distant tribes of men come bending before him, and his religion of peace and joy diffusing its blessings around the world. In the contemplation of these future glories, he desires to furnish consolation for his afflicted countrymen in Babylon, and at the same time, a demonstration of the truth of the oracles of God, and of the certain prevalence of the true religion, which should impart happiness and peace in all future times.

The character of the period when this portion of the prophecy was delivered, and the circumstances under which it was uttered, as well as the object which the prophet had in view, may account for some remarkable features in it which cannot fail to strike the



attentive reader. (1.) The *name* of the prophet does not occur. It may have been designed that the consolation should be furnished rather by the *nature* of the truth, than by the name or authority of the man. When addressing monarchs, and when denouncing the vices and crimes of the age, his name is mentioned (comp. ch. vii. and xxxviii.); the authority under which he acted is stated; and he utters his warnings in the name of JEHOVAH. Here he presents simple truth, in a case where it is to be supposed the people would be desirous of consolation, and where it would be presumed that his prophetic authority and character were already sufficiently established. (2.) There is less of fire and impetuosity; less of severity and abruptness of manner, in this than in the former prophecies. Isaiah was now an old man, and his style, and manner of thinking, and of utterance, would be naturally mellowed by age. His object, also, was not reproof, so much as consolation; it was not, as formerly, to denounce judgment, but to speak of comfort. It was not to rebuke kings and nobles for their crimes, and to rouse the nation to a sense of its danger; it was to mitigate the woes of those in bondage, and to furnish topics of support to those who were groaning in captivity far from the temple of their God, and from the sepulchres of their fathers. The language of the second part is more gentle and flowing—more tender and mild. There is exquisite beauty and finish, and occasionally there are bursts of the highest sublimity; but there is not the compression of thought, and the struggling as it were for utterance, which there is often in the former part. There, the prophetic impulse is often like waters pent up between projecting rocks and hills, and where it struggles and bursts forth impetuously and irresistibly; in this portion of the prophecy it is like the placid stream—the full-flowing majestic river—calm, pure, deep, and sublime. There are, indeed, characteristics of the same style, and of the same author, but it is in different circumstances, and with a different object in view. Homer, in the Odyssey, has been compared to the sun when setting with full orb, but with diminished brightness; in the Iliad, to the sun in his meridian. Isaiah, in this part of his prophecies, compared with the former, resembles the sun shining with steady and pure effulgence without a cloud, compared with the sun when it bursts through clouds in the darkened

heavens, the light struggling through the openings in the sky, and amidst the thunders that roll and echo along the hills and vales. (3.) The portion which follows (ch. xl.—lxvi.) is a *single* prophecy, apparently uttered at one time, and relating to one subject, and having one great design. The former part of his prophecies consists of a number of independent and separate predictions, some of them very brief, and having no immediate connexion with each other. Here all is connected, and the same design is kept steadily and constantly in view. His beautiful descriptions roll on, to use one of his own images, “like a river,” or like the “waves of the sea,” and there is an inimitable beauty and majesty in his sentiments and in his style. (4.) Almost everything which occurs in the prophecy relates to that which was to be fulfilled long after the time of Isaiah. Occasionally there is a hint, or glance, or slight allusion to the prevalence of idolatry in his own time, but there is no express mention of the events which were then occurring. He does not mention his own circumstances; he does not allude to the name of the monarch who lived when he wrote. He seems to have forgotten the present, and to live and act in the scenes of the distant future. He therefore speaks *as if* he were in the midst of them; he speaks as one living among the exiled Jews in Babylon when their long captivity was about to come to an end; he exhorts, rebukes, administers comforts, as if they were present to his mind, and as if he were directly addressing them. He speaks of the life, sufferings, and death of the Messiah also, as if passing before his mind, or as events which he *saw*, and seeks personal consolation and support amidst the prevailing crimes and calamities of his own times, in the contemplation of future scenes.

It will be seen, from what has been said, and from the examination of the prophecy itself, that it possesses a decidedly evangelical character. Indeed, this is so clear and apparent, that many have maintained that the primary reference is to the Messiah, and that it had no relation to the return from the captivity at Babylon. Such was the opinion of the learned Vitranga. Even Grotius, of whom it has been said, while Cocceius found “Christ everywhere, he found him nowhere,” admits that the prophecy has an obvious reference to the Messiah. His words are, *Cum autem omnia Dei beneficia umbram in se contineant eorum quæ Christus præstitit,*

tum præcipue ista omnia quæ deinceps ab Esaia prænunciabuntur, verbis sæpissime a Deo sic directis, *ut simplicius limpidiusque in res Christi, quam in illas, quas primo significare Esaias voluit, convenirent.* Indeed, it is impossible to read this portion of the prophecy without believing that it had reference to the Messiah, and that it was designed to furnish consolation from the contemplation of his glorious reign. That there was a primary reference to the return from the captivity at Babylon, I shall endeavour to show as we advance in the interpretation of the prophecy. But it will also be seen, that though the prophet *begins* with that, he *ends* usually with a contemplation of the Messiah; that these events seem to have lain so near each other in the beautiful field of prophetic vision, that the contemplation of the one naturally suggested the other; and that the description passes from the former object to the latter, and the contemplation of the person and work of the Messiah, and the triumphs of his gospel, become the absorbing theme of his glowing language.

# THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

## CHAPTER XL.

### ANALYSIS.

I. The subject of the whole prophecy (ch. xl.—lxvi.) is introduced in vs. 1, 2. The general design is, to comfort the afflicted and oppressed people of God. They are contemplated as in Babylon, and as *near* the close of the exile. Jerusalem is regarded as in ruins (comp. ch. xlv. 26—28; li. 3; lii. 9; lviii. 12); the land is waste and desolate (lxiii. 18); the city and the temple are destroyed (lxiv. 9—11). Their deliverance is about to take place and their captivity about to end, and the people about to be restored to their own land, (ch. xlv. 28; lviii. 12; lx. 10; lxv. 9.) In this situation, the prophet is directed to address words of consolation to the oppressed and long-captive Jews, and to assure them that their captivity is about to close. Jerusalem—now in ruins—was to be assured that the end of her desolation was near, for that an ample punishment had been taken for all her sins.

II. The prophet next represents the deliverance which would be accomplished under an image taken from the march of earthly kings, vs. 3—8. The voice of a herald is heard in the wilderness making proclamation, that every obstacle should be removed, that JEHOVAH might return to Zion conducting his people. As he had conducted them from the land of Egypt, so he was about to conduct them from Babylon, and to appear again in Jerusalem and in the temple. Between Babylon and Jerusalem there was an immense tract of country which was a pathless desert. Through this land, the people would naturally be conducted; and the voice

of the herald is heard demanding that a highway should be made—in the manner of a herald who preceded an army, and who required valleys to be filled, and roads to be constructed, over which the monarch and his army might pass with ease and safety. It is to be observed that the *main* thing here is not that *the people* should return, and a way for them be made, but that JEHOVAH was about to return to Jerusalem, and that the pathway should be made for *him*. *He* was to be their leader and guide, and this was the principal source of comfort in their return; the principal event which was to give joy—that the glory of JEHOVAH was again about to be seen in Zion that had been so long desolate. In this the Holy Spirit, who directed and inspired the prophet, *purposely* suggests language that would be applicable to a far more important event, when the herald of the Messiah should announce *his* coming. The main thing which the voice was to cry is represented in vs. 6—8. That was, that JEHOVAH was faithful to his promises, and that his predictions would be certainly fulfilled. Everything else would fade away—the grass would wither, the flower would fail, and the people would die—but the word of JEHOVAH would be unfailing, and this would be manifest alike in the release of the people from Babylon, and in the coming of the Messiah.

III. The messenger that brought these glad-tidings to Zion, or Jerusalem, is exhorted to announce the happy news to the remaining cities of Judah—to go to an eminence—to lift up the voice—and to announce that their God had come. ver. 9.

IV. In vs. 10, 11, the assurance is

## CHAPTER XL.

1. Comfort <sup>a</sup> ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.<sup>a</sup> Heb. 6, 17, 18.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

1. Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people,  
Saith your God.

given that their God would come. He would come "with a strong hand"—almighty, and able to save; he would come, able to reward his people; he would come as a tender and gentle shepherd, regarding especially the weak and feeble of his people—language alike applicable to God who should conduct the people from exile to their own land, and to the Messiah—though more strikingly, and completely fulfilled in the latter.

V. The mention of the *omnipotence* of JEHOVAH, who was about to conduct his people to their own land, and to come himself to Zion, leads the prophet into a most sublime description of his power, majesty, and glory, the object of which seems to be to induce them to put entire confidence in him. vs. 12—17. This omnipotence, majesty, and glory, is set forth in most elevated and glowing language. God measures the waters in the hollow of his hand; he measures the heavens with a span; he measures the dust of the earth, and weighs the mountains; ver. 12. None has counselled, or can counsel him—his understanding is superior to that of all creatures. vs. 13, 14. The nations before him are as a drop of a bucket, and as the small dust of the balance, and as nothing. vs. 15, 17. All the vast forests of Lebanon, and all the beasts that roam there, would not be sufficient to constitute a burnt-offering that should be a proper expression of his majesty and glory. ver. 16.

VI. From this statement of the majesty and glory of God, the prophet infers the folly of idolatry, and shows the absurdity of attempting to form an image or likeness of God, and the certainty that all who trusted in idols should be destroyed as the stubble is swept away by the whirlwind. vs. 18—25.

VII. And another inference of the prophet, and the main one which he designed to draw, is, that the people should put confidence in God. They should trust him who had such power; they should believe that he was able to save them; they should wait on him who alone could renew their strength. vs. 26—31. The entire scope and design of the chapter, therefore, is, to induce them to put their reliance in God, who was about to come to vindicate his people, and who would assuredly accomplish all his predictions and promises. The argument is a most beautiful one; and the language is unsurpassed in sublimity.

1. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.* This is the exordium, or the general subject of this and the following chapters. The commencement is abrupt, as often happens in Isaiah and the other prophets. The *scene* where this vision is laid is in Babylon; the *time* near the close of the captivity. The *topic*, or main subject of the consolation, is stated in the following verse—that that captivity was about to end, and that brighter and happier days were to succeed their calamities and their exile. The exhortation to "comfort" the people is to be understood as an address of God to those in Babylon, whose office or duty it would be to address them—that is, to the ministers of religion, or to the prophets. The Targum of Jonathan thus renders it: "Ye prophets, prophesy consolations concerning my people." The LXX render it, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith God. O priests, speak to the heart of Jerusalem, comfort her," &c. The design of Isaiah is, doubtless, to furnish that which should be to them a source of consolation when amidst the deep distress of

2. Speak ye <sup>1</sup> comfortably to that her iniquity is pardoned: for Jerusalem, and cry unto her, she hath received of the LORD<sup>2</sup> that her <sup>2</sup> warfare is accomplished, hand double <sup>b</sup> for all her sins.

<sup>1</sup> to the heart.

<sup>2</sup> or, appointed time.

b ch. 61. 7.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

2. Speak ye encouragement to Jerusalem, and declare unto her,  
That her hard service is accomplished;  
That her iniquity is expiated;  
That she hath received from the hand of JEHOVAH double  
[punishment] for all her sins.

their long captivity—to furnish an assurance that that captivity was about to end, and that brighter and happier times were to ensue. The exhortation or command is *repeated*, to give intensity or emphasis to it, in the usual manner in Hebrew, where emphasis is denoted by the *repetition* of a word. The idea is, that their trials were about to end, and that there was unfailing and sure consolation. The mind of the prophet is fixed intently on it; and he presses those whose office it was, to use *all means* to give comfort to the long-afflicted people of God. The word rendered comfort (from נָחַם, *Nākhām*) means, properly, to draw the breath forcibly, to sigh, pant, groan, &c.; then to lament, or grieve, Jer. xv. 6; Ps. xc. 13; then to comfort or console *one-self*, Gen. xxxviii. 12; then to take vengeance; comp. Note, Isa. i. 24. All the forms of the word, and all the significations, indicate *deep emotion*, and the *obtaining of relief* either by repenting, or by taking vengeance, or by administering the proper topics of consolation. Here the meaning is clear, as denoting a command to administer consolation. The topic of consolation is, that their calamities were about to come to an end, in accordance with the *unchanging promises of a faithful God*, ver. 8; and is thus in accordance with what is said in Heb. vi. 17, 18. ¶ *My people*. The people of God. This is the language of God addressed to those who were appointed to minister to *his* people. He regarded those in Babylon as *his* people; and he designed also to adduce such topics of consolation as

should be adapted to comfort *all* his people in all ages. ¶ *Saith your God*. The God of those whom he addressed—the God of the prophets or ministers of religion whose office was to comfort and instruct the people, and whom they served in the prophetic or ministerial office. We may remark here, that it is an important part of the ministerial office everywhere to administer consolation to the people of God in affliction; to exhibit to them his promises; to urge the topics of religion which are adapted to sustain the soul; and especially to uphold and cheer them with the assurance that their trials will soon come to an end, and will all terminate in complete deliverance from sorrow and calamity in heaven.

2. *Speak ye comfortably*. Heb., נָחַם, *ṣāl-lēbh*, as in the margin, “to the heart.” The *heart* is the seat of the affections. It is there that sorrow and joy are felt. We are oppressed there with grief, and we speak familiarly now of being pained at the heart, and of being of a glad, or merry heart, &c. To speak “to the heart,” is to speak in such a way as to remove the troubles of the heart; to furnish consolation and joy. It means that they were not merely to urge such topics as should convince the understanding, and satisfy the judgment; but such also as should be adapted to minister consolation to the heart. So the word is used in Gen. xxxiv. 3: “And his soul clave unto Dinah—and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly (Heb., to the heart) of the damsel.” Gen. i. 21: “And he com-

forted them, and spake kindly unto them." Heb., to their hearts. See also 2 Chron. xxxii. 6. ¶ *To Jerusalem.* The direction is not merely to the people in Babylon, but it is also to Jerusalem itself lying in ruins. Their consolation was to arise in part from the fact that Jerusalem was to be rebuilt, and re-peopled by them. The general direction is, therefore, that the entire series of topics of consolation should be adduced, the people were to return from their bondage, and Jerusalem was to be rebuilt, and the worship of God to be restored. ¶ *And cry unto her.* In the manner of a crier; or one making public and loud proclamation; comp. vs. 3. 9. Jerusalem is here personified. She is addressed as in ruins, and as about to be rebuilt, and as capable of consolation from this promise. ¶ *That her warfare is accomplished.* LXX., "That her humiliation *ταπεινωσις* is accomplished." The Hebrew word, *מָלָח*, *Tzābān*, warfare, properly means an army, or host, comp. Note, ch. i. 9; and is usually applied to an army going forth to war, or marshalled for battle. 2 Sam. viii. 16; x. 7. It is there used to denote an appointed time of service; the discharge of a duty similar to an enlistment, and is applied to the services of the Levites in the tabernacle. Num. iv. 23: "All that enter in to perform the service (Heb., to war the warfare), to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation." Comp. Num. viii. 24, 25. Hence it is applied to human life contemplated as a warfare, an enlistment, involving hard service and calamity; an enlistment from which there is to be a discharge by death.

Is there not a set-time (Heb., a warfare) to man upon earth?

Are not his days as the days of an hireling?

Job vii. 1.

But if a man die—shall he indeed live again?

All the days of my appointed time (Heb., my warfare) will I wait,

Till my change come.

Job xiv. 14.

Comp. Dan. x. 1. The word then means hard service, such as soldiers endure; an appointed time which they are to serve; an enlistment involving

hardships, toil, privation, danger, calamity. And in this sense it is applied here to Jerusalem—to the trials, calamities, desolations to which she was subjected for her sins, and which were to endure a *definite and fixed time*—like the enlistment of an army. That time was now coming to an end, and to be succeeded by a release, or discharge. Vitringa, who supposes that this refers primarily and solely to the times of the Messiah, regards this as meaning that the definite time of the legal economy, a time of toil, and of vexations and troublesome ceremonies, was about to end by the coming of the Messiah. But the more correct interpretation is, probably, that which supposes that there was a primary and main reference to the long and painful captivity of the Jews in Babylon. ¶ *That her iniquity.* The iniquity, or sin here referred to, is that long series of acts of rebellion, corruption and idolatry, with which the Jewish people had been chargeable, and which had rendered their captivity necessary. Their removal to Babylon was a national punishment for national sins. As a nation, that sin was now expiated, or removed by this protracted punishment. It was a sufficient expression of the Divine displeasure at their national offences, and God was *satisfied*, *נִרְצָה*, *Nirtzāh*, with it, and could consistently restore them to their land, and to their former privileges. The whole language here has respect to *national*, and not to individual offences. ¶ *Is pardoned.* Vulg., "Dimissa est iniquitas illius." LXX., *ἀέλγυται αὐτῆς ἡ ἀμαρτία*, her sin is loosed, dissolved, remitted. The word *pardon* does not quite express the meaning of the word in the original, *נִרְצָה*. The word, *נִרְצָה*, *Rätzāh*, properly means, to delight in any person or thing; to take pleasure in, &c. Then to receive graciously, or favorably; to delight in sacrifices and offerings; Ps. li. 18, Job xxxiii. 26; Ezek. xx. 40, and in the Hiphil conj., to satisfy, or pay off; *i. e.*, to cause to be satisfied, or pleased; and then in Pass., to be satisfied, to be paid off; to be pleased or satisfied with an expiation,

or with an atonement for sins, so as to *delight* in the person who makes it. Here it means, not strictly to *pardon*, but it means that they had suffered what God had appointed to them; they had endured the national punishment which he saw to be necessary; they had *served out* the long and painful enlistment which he had appointed, and now he was *satisfied*, and took pleasure in them, and had delight in releasing them, and restoring them to their own land. It does not refer to the pardon of men in consequence of the atonement made by the Lord Jesus, but it may be used as an *illustration* of that, when God is satisfied, or paid off—so to speak—by that atonement; and when he *has pleasure* or *delight* in setting the soul free from the bondage of sin, and admitting the sinner to his favor—as he had delight here in restoring his people to their own land. ¶ *For she hath received.* Jerusalem, in her trials and her long desolations, hath received. She has been desolate now for almost seventy years, on the supposition that this relates to the period near the close of the exile, and that was regarded as an ample or full expression of what she *ought* to suffer for her national offences. ¶ *Of the LORD's hand.* From the hand, or by the agency of, JEHOVAH. It had been appointed by him, and had been brought upon them by his agency. Whoever were the instruments, her sufferings were to be regarded as his appointment. “*Double for all her sins.*” The word rendered “double,” כִּפְלָיִים, *kîphlāyîm*, is the dual form from כָּפַל, *a doubling*, and occurs in Job xli. 13:

Who will rip up the covering of his armour?  
Against the *doubling* of his nostrils who will  
advance? Good.

And in xi. 6:

And that he would unfold to them the secrets  
of wisdom,  
That they are *double* to that which is;

that is, there are *double-folds* to God's wisdom, the wisdom of God is complicated, inexplicable. GESENIUS. The word in Job means “conduplications, folds, complications, mazes, intricacies.” GOOD. Here the word has doubtless its

usual and proper meaning, and denotes *double, twice as much*. And the expression may denote that God had inflicted on them *double* that which had been usually inflicted on rebellious nations, or on the nation before for its sins. Or the word may be used to denote *abundance*, and the prophet may design to teach that they had been *amply*, or *abundantly*, punished for their crimes. “That is,” says Grotius, “as much as God judged to be sufficient.” “Double, here,” says Calvin, “is to be received for large and abundant.” Some have supposed (see Rosenmüller, who approves of this interpretation) that the word “sins” here means the punishment of sins, and that the word *double* refers to the mercies or favors which they were about to receive, or which God had purposed to confer on them. So Lowth understands it; and renders the word, לָקַחְהָּ, *Lāqēhkhāh*, shall receive, in the future:

That she shall receive at the hand of JEHOVAH  
[Blessings] double to the punishment of all  
her sins.

So Noyes:

That she shall receive from the hand of JEHOVAH  
Double for all her punishment.

But though this was true, that their favors on their return, in the hopes of the Messiah, and in their renovated privileges, would be far more numerous than their sufferings had been, yet this does not so well suit the connexion, where the prophet is giving a *reason* why they should be released from their bondage, and restored to the privileges of their own land. That reason manifestly is, that they had suffered what was regarded by Jehovah as an *ample* expression of his displeasure for their national offences. It does not refer to individual sinners; nor to any power which they have to make atonement for their sins; nor does it refer to the atonement made by the Messiah. But it may be remarked, by the way, that in the sufferings of the Redeemer there has been *ample* and abundant satisfaction for the sins of his people. The



3. The voice \* of him that ye the way of the LORD, make  
crieth in the wilderness, Prepare<sup>d</sup> straight in the desert a highway  
for our God.

\* Matt. 3. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Mal. 3. 1.

NEW TRANSLATION.

3. The voice of one crying:

"In the wilderness prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH!

In the desert make straight a high-way for our God!"

Chaldee interpreter understands this as Rosenmüller does, that the word "double" refers to the mercies which they had received: "Because she has received a cup of consolation from the presence of the Lord, *as if* ~~she~~ *he* <sup>she</sup> ~~had~~ <sup>been</sup> smitten twice, or twofold, for all her sins."

3. *The voice of him that crieth.* Lowth and Noyes render this, "a voice crieth," and annex the phrase "in the wilderness" to the latter part of the sentence:

A voice crieth, "In the wilderness prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH."

The Hebrew, *קוֹל הַיְּהוָה, qōl qōrēn*, will bear this construction, though the Vulgate and the LXX render it as in our version. The sense is not essentially different, though the parallelism seems to require the translation proposed by Lowth. The design is to state the source of consolation referred to in the previous verses, or to show that that on which the consolation rested was about to be fulfilled. The time of the exile at Babylon was about to be completed. Their long and painful captivity was about to end. The people were about to be restored to their own land. JEHOVAH was about to conduct them again to their own country through the pathless wilderness, as he had formerly conducted them from Egypt to the land of promise. The prophet, therefore, represents himself as hearing a voice; the voice of a herald, or a forerunner, in the pathless waste, giving direction that a way should be made through the desert for the return of the people with JEHOVAH as their leader. The whole scene is represented as the march, or return of JEHOVAH at the head of his people to the land of Judea. The idea is taken from the practice of Eastern monarchs,

who, whenever they entered on a journey or an expedition, especially through a barren and unfrequented, or inhospitable country—a country where they had reason to apprehend obstructions and difficulties—sent harbingers, or heralds, before them to prepare the way. To do this, it was necessary for them to provide supplies, and make bridges, or find fording places over the streams; to level hills, or to construct causeways over valleys, or to fill them up; and to make a way through the forest which might lie in their intended line of march. This was necessary, because these contemplated expeditions often involved the necessity of crossing deserts or streams, and of marching through countries where there were no public highways that would afford facilities for the passage of an army. Thus Arrian (Hist., liv. cap. 30) says of Alexander, "He now proceeded to the river Indus, the army," *i.e.*, *ἡ στρατιά*, a part of the army, or an army sufficient for the purpose "going before, which made a way for him, for otherwise there would have been no mode of passing through that region." "When a great prince in the East," says Paxton, "sets out on a journey, it is usual to send a party of men before him to clear the way. The state of those countries in every age, where roads are almost unknown, and from want of cultivation in many places overgrown with brambles and other thorny plants, which renders travelling, especially with a large retinue, incommodious, requires this precaution. The emperor of Hindostan, in his progress through his dominions, as described in the narrative of Sir Thomas Roe's embassy to the court of Delhi, was preceded by a very great company, sent before him to cut up the trees and bushes, to level and smooth the road,

and prepare their place of encampment. Balin, who swayed the imperial sceptre of India, had five hundred chosen men, in rich livery, with their drawn sabres, who ran before him, proclaiming his approach, and clearing the way. Nor was this honor reserved exclusively for the reigning emperor; it was often shown to persons of royal birth. When an Indian princess made a visit to her father, the roads were directed to be repaired, and made clear for her journey: fruit trees were planted, water vessels placed in the road-side, and great illuminations prepared for the occasion. Mr. Bruce gives nearly the same account of a journey which the king of Abyssinia made through a part of his dominions. The chief magistrate of every district through which he had to pass, was, by his office, obliged to have the roads cleared, levelled, and smoothed; and he mentions that a magistrate of one of the districts having failed in this part of his duty, was, together with his son, immediately put to death on the spot where a thorn happened to catch the garment and interrupt for a moment the progress of his majesty. We shall be able, perhaps, to form a more clear and precise idea from the account which Diodorus gives of the marches of Semiramis, the celebrated queen of Babylon, into Media and Persia. In her march to Ecbatane, says the historian, she came to the Zarcean mountain, which extending many furlongs, and being full of craggy precipices and deep hollows, could not be passed without taking a great compass. Being therefore desirous of leaving an everlasting memorial of herself, as well as of shortening the way, she ordered the precipices to be digged down, and the hollows to be filled up; and at a great expense she made a shorter and more expeditious road, which to this day is called from her the road of Semiramis. Afterwards she went into Persia, and all the other countries of Asia subjected to her dominion, and wherever she went, she ordered the mountains and the precipices to be levelled, raised causeways in the plain country, and at a great expense made the ways passable. Whatever

truth may be in this story, the following statement is entitled to the fullest credit: All eastern potentates have their precursors and a number of pioneers to clear the road, by removing obstacles, and filling up the ravines and the hollow ways in the route. In the days of Mogul splendor, the emperor caused the hills and mountains to be levelled, and the valleys to be filled up, for his convenience. This beautifully illustrates the figurative language in the approach of the Prince of Peace, where every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." The writer of the apocryphal Book of Baruch refers to the same subject by the same images: "For God hath appointed that every high hill, and banks of long continuance, should be cast down, and valleys filled up, to make even the ground, that Israel may go safely in the glory of God." Chap. v. 7. It is evident that the primary and direct reference of this passage was to the exiles in Babylon, and to their return from their long captivity, to the land of their fathers. The imagery, the circumstances, the design of the prophecy, all seem to demand such an interpretation. At the same time it is as clear, I apprehend, that the prophet was inspired to use language, of design, which should appropriately, and more fully express a more important event, the coming of the forerunner of the Messiah, and the work which he should perform as preparatory to his advent. There was such a striking *similarity* in the two events, that, so to speak, they could be grouped together in the same part of the prophetic vision or picture; the mind would naturally, by the laws of prophetic suggestion (Intro. § 7, 3), glance from one to the other, and the same language would appropriately and accurately express both. Both could be described as the coming of JEHOVAH to bless and save his people; both occurred after a long state of desolation and bondage—the one a bondage in Babylon, the other in sin, and national declension. The pathless desert was literally to be passed

through in the one instant; in the other the condition of the Jews was that which was not unaptly likened to a desert—a condition where sin abounded, where piety had ceased to flourish, and where pride and hypocrisy prevailed—a condition in regard to real piety not unlike the state of a vast desert in comparison with fruitful fields. “It was,” says Lowth, “in this desert country, destitute at that time of all religious cultivation, in true piety and works unfruitful that John was sent to prepare the way of the Lord by preaching repentance.” That this passage has a reference to John as the forerunner of the Messiah is evident from Matt. iii. 3, where it is applied to him, introduced by this remark, “For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice,” &c. See also John i. 23. This form of quotation proves that Matthew meant to declare that the passage had a reference to John as the precursor of the Messiah. The events were so similar in their main features, that the same language would describe both. John was nurtured in the desert, and passed his early life there, until he entered on his public work. Luke i. 80. He began to preach in the wilderness of Judea—a mountainous country lying east of Jerusalem, and sparsely inhabited, and which was usually spoken of as a desert or wilderness (Matt. iii. 1); and it was here that his voice was heard announcing the coming of the Messiah, and it was here that he pointed him out to his own followers. John i. 28, 29. ¶ *In the wilderness.* Babylon was separated from Judea by an immense tract of country which was one continued desert. A large part of Arabia, called Arabia Deserta, was situated in this region. To pass in a direct line, therefore, from Babylon to Jerusalem, it was necessary to go through this desolate region. It was here that the prophet speaks of hearing a voice commanding the hills to be levelled, and the valleys filled up, that there might be a convenient highway for the people to return. Comp. Notes on ch. xxxv. 8—10. We have seen also that John literally made his proclamation in a region that was called

a wilderness. ¶ *Prepare ye the way.* Remove the obstructions; make a road, &c. This was in the form of the usual proclamation of a monarch commanding the people to make a way for him to pass. Applied to the return of the exile Jews, it means that they were about to return to their own land, and that the command of God had gone forth that all obstacles should be removed. Applied to John, it means that the people were to prepare for the reception of the Messiah; that they were to repent of their sins (Matt. iii. 2); that they were to fit their hearts to embrace him, and to remove all in their opinions and conduct which would tend to hinder his cordial reception, or which would prevent his success among them. ¶ *Of the LORD.* Of JEHOVAH. JEHOVAH was regarded as the leader of his people, and was about to conduct them to their own land. The march, therefore, was regarded as that of JEHOVAH, as a monarch or king, at the head of his people, conducting them to their own land; and to prepare the way of JEHOVAH was, therefore, to prepare for his march at the head of his people. Applied to the Messiah, it means that God was about to come to his people to redeem them. This language naturally and obviously implies, that he whose way was thus to be prepared was JEHOVAH, the true God. So it was undoubtedly in regard to him who was to be the leader of the exile Jews to their own land, since none but JEHOVAH could thus conduct them. And if it be admitted that the language has also a reference to the Messiah, then it demonstrates that he was appropriately called JEHOVAH, or that this name would be properly given to him. That John the Baptist had such a view of him is apparent from what is said of him. Thus, John i. 15, he says of him that “he was before” him—which was not true, unless he had an existence previous to his birth; he calls him, ver. 8, “the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father;” in ver. 34 he calls him “the Son of God.” Comp. John x. 30, 33, 36; and in ch. iii. 31, he says of him, “he that cometh from above is ABOVE ALL; he that cometh from

4. Every valley shall be exalted, shall be made straight,<sup>1</sup> and the  
and every mountain and hill shall rough places<sup>2</sup> plain :  
be made low: and the crooked<sup>c</sup>

e c. 45. 2.

<sup>1</sup> or, a straight place.

<sup>2</sup> or, a plain place.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

4. "Every valley shall be exalted,  
And every mountain and hill shall be made low;  
And the hilly country shall be made level,  
And the precipices a plain.

heaven is ABOVE ALL." In accordance with this view it is said, in Mal. iii. 1, that "the LORD (not JEHOVAH, indeed, in the original, but a word which is often used to designate him, יהוה, *Hâshadôn*,) shall suddenly come to his temple," &c. Comp. Mal. iv. 5, 6. Though this is not one of the most direct and certain proof-texts of the divinity of the Messiah, yet it is one which may be applied to him when that divinity is demonstrated from other places. It is not one that can be used with absolute certainty in an argument on the subject to convince those who deny that divinity—since even on the supposition that it refers to the Messiah, it may be said plausibly, and with some force, that it may mean that JEHOVAH was about to manifest himself by means of the Messiah; yet it is a passage which those who are convinced of the divinity of Christ from other quarters, will apply without hesitation to him as descriptive of his rank, and confirmatory of his divinity. ¶ *Make straight*, &c. Make a straight, or direct road; one that should conduct at once to their land. Remove the inequalities of the way, and make it level and direct. The Chaldee renders this verse, "Prepare a way before the people of JEHOVAH; make in the plain ways before the congregation of our God." ¶ *A highway*. See Note on ch. xxxv. 8.

4. Every valley shall be exalted. That is, every valley, or low piece of ground, shall be filled up so as to make a level highway, as was done in order to facilitate the march of armies. This verse is evidently designed to explain what is intended in ver. 3, by preparing the way

for JEHOVAH. Applied to the return of the Jews from Babylon, it means simply that the way was to be prepared for their journey. The obstructions were to be removed. The impassable valleys were to be filled up so as to make a level road, and easy for their journey. If applied to the work of John, the forerunner of the Messiah, it means that the nation was to be called on to put itself in a state of preparation for his coming, and for the success of his labours among them. Vitringa, and others, have endeavoured to specify what particular moral qualities in the nation are meant by the "valley," by the "mountain and hill," and by the "crooked" and "rough places." But the illustrations are fanciful, and such as cannot be demonstrated to be referred to by the prophet. The general sense is plain. The language, as we have seen, is taken from the march of a monarch at the head of his army. The general idea is, that all obstructions were to be removed; and that the march was to be easy, and without embarrassment. As applicable to the work of John also, the language means in general, that whatever there was in the opinions, habits, conduct, in the pride, self-confidence, and irreligion of the nation that would prevent his cordial reception, and his triumphant march, so to speak, through the nation, was to be removed. ¶ *Every mountain and hill*, &c. They shall be dug down so as to make the journey easy. All obstructions were to be removed. ¶ *And the crooked*, &c. The word here used, נָקִי, *nāqōh*, is usually rendered *crooked*; but perhaps not by any good authority. It is the word from which the name

5. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

NEW TRANSLATION.

5. "And the glory of JEHOVAH shall be revealed,  
And all flesh shall see it together:  
For the mouth of JEHOVAH hath spoken it."

*Jacob* is derived. The verb נָקַד, *yāqādh*, usually denotes to be behind; to come from behind; or as Gesenius supposes, to be elevated like a mound, arched like a hill or tumulus, and is hence applied to the *heel* from the figure. See Hos. xii. 3; Gen. xxv. 26. According to this, the word would denote properly a hill, or mound, acclivity, &c., which would put back those who attempted to ascend. ¶ *Shall be made straight.* Marg., "A straight place." The Hebrew word, שָׁמֹר, denotes, properly, evenness, a level region, a plain. The hilly places would be reduced to a level. ¶ *And the rough places.* Those which are hard, bound up, stony, difficult to pass. Such as abounded with rocks and precipices, and which presented obstructions to a journey. Such places abounded in the region lying between Palestine and Babylon. ¶ *Plain.* Marg., "A plain place." A smooth, level plain.

5. *And the glory of the LORD.* The glory of JEHOVAH. The phrase here means evidently the majesty, power, or honor of JEHOVAH. He would display his power, and reveal the excellence of his character, and confirm his promises, and show himself to be a covenant-keeping God, by delivering his people from their bondage, and reconducting them to their own land. This glory and faithfulness would be shown in his delivering them from their captivity in Babylon; and it would be still more illustriously shown in his sending the Messiah to accomplish the deliverance of his people in later days. ¶ *Shall be revealed.* Shall be made known, and manifested. It shall be conspicuous, and seen afar. ¶ *And all flesh.* All men. The word *flesh* is often used to denote human nature, or mankind in

general. Gen. vi. 12; Ps. lxxv. 2; cxlv. 21. The idea is, that the deliverance of his people would be so remarkable, and such a display of the Divine interposition, and such a confirmation of his truth and faithfulness, that all nations would witness it, and would discern the evidences of his power and glory. But there is a fulness and a richness in the language, which shows that it is not to be confined to that event. It is more strikingly applicable to the advent of the Messiah—and to the fact that through him the glory of JEHOVAH would be manifest to all nations. Rosenmüller supposes that this should be translated—

And all flesh shall see together  
That the mouth of JEHOVAH hath spoken it.

The Hebrew will bear this construction, but there is no necessity for departing from the translation in the common version. The LXX add here the words "salvation of God," so as to read it, "and all flesh shall see the salvation of our God," and this reading has been adopted in Luke iii. 6;—or it may be more probable that Luke (iii. 4—6) has quoted from different parts of Isaiah, and that he intended to quote that part, not from the version of the LXX, but from Isa. lii. 10. Lowth, on the authority of the LXX, proposes to restore these words to the Hebrew text. But the authority is insufficient. The Vulgate, the Chaldee, the Syriac, and the Hebrew MSS. concur in the reading of the present Hebrew text, and the authority of the Septuagint is altogether insufficient to justify a change. ¶ *For the mouth of the Lord.* The strongest possible confirmation that it would be fulfilled. See Note, ch. xxxiv. 16. The idea is, that God had certainly promised their deliverance from bondage; and

6. The voice said, Cry. And flesh is grass, and all the goodness he said, What shall I cry? All<sup>f</sup> ness thereof is as the flower of the field :

ſ Ps. 103. 15. Ja. 1. 10, 11.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

6. A voice said, "Proclaim!"  
And he said, "What shall I proclaim?"  
"All flesh is grass, [said the voice]  
And all its beauty as the flower of the field."

that his interposition, in a manner which should attract the attention of all nations, was certainly purposed by him. Few events have ever more impressively manifested the glory of God than the redemption of his people from Babylon; none has occurred, or will ever occur, that will more impressively demonstrate his glory, wisdom, and faithfulness, than the redemption of the world by the Messiah.

6. *The voice said.* Or rather, "a voice." Isaiah represents himself here again as hearing a voice. The word "the" introduced in our translation mars the sense, inasmuch as it leads to the supposition that it was the *same* voice, or the voice of the same person or crier referred to in ver. 3. But it is different. *That* was the voice of a crier or herald, proclaiming that a way was to be open in the desert. *This* is introduced for a different purpose. It is to proclaim distinctly that while everything else was fading and transitory, the promise of God was firm and secure. Isaiah, therefore, represents himself as hearing a voice requiring the prophets (so the Chaldee) to *make a proclamation*. An inquiry was at once made, what should be the nature of the proclamation. The answer was, that all flesh was grass, &c. He had (ver. 3—5) introduced a herald announcing that the way was to be prepared for their return. He now introduces *another* voice, with a distinct message to the people, that God was faithful, and that his promises would not fail. A voice, a command is heard, requiring those whose duty it was, to make proclamation. The voice of God; the inspiration; the Spirit speaking to the prophets, commanded them to cry.

¶ *And he said.* Lowth and Noyes read this, "And I said." The LXX and the Vulgate read it also in this manner, in the first person. Two manuscripts examined by Kennicott also read it in the first person. Houbigant, Hensler, and Doederlin adopt this reading. But the authority is not sufficient to justify a change in the Hebrew text. The Syriac and Chaldee read it as it is in the present Hebrew text, in the third person. The sense is, that the person, or prophet, to whom the command came to make proclamation, made answer, "What shall I proclaim? What shall be the nature of my proclamation?" It is equivalent to saying, "It was answered," or, I heard an answer; or if Isaiah is the person to whom the voice is represented as coming, it means that *he* answered; and is, therefore, equivalent to the reading in the LXX and Vulgate, and adopted by Lowth. This is the probable supposition, that Isaiah represents himself as hearing the voice, and as expressing a willingness to make proclamation, but as waiting to know *what* he was to proclaim. ¶ *All flesh.* This is the answer; or this is what he was to proclaim. The general design or scope of the answer was, that he was to proclaim that the promise of JEHOVAH was secure and firm (ver. 8), and that, therefore, God would certainly come to deliver them. To make this more striking and impressive by way of contrast, he states that all men are frail; that they are weak and feeble like the grass that is soon withered.—The words "all flesh," evidently mean all *men*. Ver. 5. The expression does not refer particularly to the Jews in Babylon, or to any single nation or class of people;

7. The grass withereth, the flower  
fadeth: because the Spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the  
people is grass.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

7. "The grass withereth,  
The flower fadeth,  
When the wind of JEHOVAH bloweth upon it:  
Truly the people is grass.

but to all men, in all places, and at all times. All princes, nobles, and monarchs; all armies and magistrates, are feeble, like grass, and will soon pass away. On the one hand, they would be unable to accomplish what was needful to be accomplished in the deliverance of the people; and on the other, their oppressors had no power to continue their bondage, since *they* were like grass, and must soon pass away. But JEHOVAH had all power, and was ever-enduring, and was able to fulfil all his purposes. ¶ *Is grass.* As grass. It is *as* feeble, weak, and as easily consumed as the grass of the field. It must soon pass away and be gone like grass. A similar sentiment is found in Ps. ciii. 15, 16:

As for man, his days are as grass;  
As a flower of the field so he flourisheth;  
For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone,  
And the place thereof shall know it no more.

See also James i. 10, 11. The passage in Isaiah is evidently quoted by Peter, 1 Epis. i. 24, 25: "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever; and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you"—a passage which proves that Isaiah had reference to the times of the Messiah in the place before us. ¶ *And all the goodness thereof.* The word rendered "goodliness," רַחֲמִים, denotes, properly, kindness, love, good-will, mercy, favor. Here it is evidently used in the sense of elegance, comeliness, beauty. The LXX render it δόξα, and so does Peter, 1 Ep. i. 24. Applied to *grass*, or to herbs, it denotes the flower, the beauty, the comeliness. Applied to

man, it means his vigor, strength, beauty; that which makes him comely and vigorous—health, energy, beauty, talent, wisdom, &c. The word "thereof" refers to "all flesh," and the passage means that all in man that renders him comely or vigorous, is like the flower of the field. His vigor is soon gone; his beauty fades; his wisdom ceases; and he falls, like the flower, to the dust.—The idea is, that the plans of man must be temporary; that his schemes must fail; that all that appears grand and attractive in him must be like the flower of the field; but that JEHOVAH endures, and his plans reach from age to age, and will certainly be accomplished. This important truth was to be proclaimed, or held up to view, that the people might be induced not to trust in man, but to put their confidence in the arm of God.

7. *The grass withereth.* Soon withers. Its beauty is soon gone. So it is with man. ¶ *The flower fadeth.* Soon fades; or fades when the wind of JEHOVAH passes over it. So it is also with man. He loses his vigor, and dies at once when JEHOVAH takes away his strength and beauty. ¶ *Because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.* This should be rendered, undoubtedly, "when the wind of JEHOVAH bloweth upon it." The word *spirit* here does not suit the connexion, and does not express the idea of the prophet. The word רוּחַ, *Rû'h*, means, properly, breath—a breathing, or blowing; and is often used indeed to denote spirit, soul, life. But it *often* means a breath of wind; a breeze; air in motion; Job xli. 21; Jer. ii. 24; xiv. 6. It is applied to the cool breeze which springs up in the evening. Gen. iii. 8.

8. The <sup>s</sup> grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word <sup>h</sup> of our God shall stand for ever.  
 9. O <sup>i</sup> Zion, that bringest good tidings to Zion.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Pet. 1. 24, 25.

<sup>A</sup> Mark 13. 31.

<sup>i</sup> Or, *thou that tellest good tidings to Zion.*

## NEW TRANSLATION.

8. "The grass withereth,  
 The flower fadeth—  
 But the word of our God shall stand for ever."  
 9. "Get thee up into a high mountain,  
 O thou that bringest glad tidings to Zion!"

Comp. Cant. ii. 17; iv. 6. It sometimes means a strong and violent wind, Gen. viii. 1; Isa. vii. 2; xli. 16; and also a tempest, or hurricane, Job i. 19; xxx. 15; Isa. xxvii. 8.—The "wind of JEHOVAH" means that which JEHOVAH sends, or causes; that which is *demonstrative* that it is his, either by its violence, or heat, or effects; and the expression here refers, doubtless, to the hot or poisonous east winds which blow in Oriental countries, and which wither and dry up everything before them. Comp. Jonah iv. 8. ¶ *Surely the people is grass.* Lowth reads this—"This people;" referring to the Jewish nation. So the Syriac. Perhaps it refers to the people of Babylon (so Rosenmüller), and means that *that* mighty people would fade away like grass. But the more probable interpretation is that which regards it as referring to *ALL* people, and of course including the Jews and the Babylonians. The sense, according to this view, is, "All nations shall fade away. All kingdoms shall fall. All human power shall cease. But the word, the promise of JEHOVAH, shall survive. It shall be unchanging amidst all revolutions; it shall survive all the fluctuations which shall take place among men. It may, therefore, be trusted with unwavering reliance."—To *produce* that reliance was the object of the proclamation.

8. *The grass withereth, &c.* This is repeated from the former verse for the sake of emphasis, or strong confirmation. ¶ *But the word of our God.* Of JEHOVAH; the God of the Jewish nation. The phrase, "word of our God," refers either to his promise to be the protector and deliverer of his people in

their captivity; or, in general, means that *all* his promises shall be firm and unchanging. ¶ *Shall stand for ever.* Shall be unmoved, fixed, abiding. Amidst all revolutions among men, his promise and his covenant shall be firm. It shall not only live amidst the changes of dynasties, and the revolutions of empires, but it shall *continue* to abide for ever and ever.—This is designed for support to an afflicted and oppressed people; and it must have been to them, in their bondage, the source of high consolation. But it is equally so now. Amidst all the changes on earth, all the revolutions of empires, all the passing away of kingdoms, God is the same, and his promises are unfulfilling. We see the grass wither at the return of autumn, or in the drought; we see the flower of the field lose its beauty, and decay; we see *man* confident in his strength, rejoicing in his vigour and his health, cut down in an instant; we see cities fall, and kingdoms lose their power, and vanish from among nations, but the word of God is the same. He changes not. He presides in all these revolutions; sits calm and unmoved amidst all these changes; and carries forward his great designs. Not one of his promises shall fail; and at the end of all the changes which human things shall undergo, JEHOVAH, the God of his people, will be the same; and they will be enabled to say that *all* his promises have been fulfilled.

9. *O Zion, that bringest good tidings.* This is evidently the continuance of what the "voice" said, or of the annunciation which was to give joy to an afflicted and oppressed people. There has been, however, much diversity of



tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, <sup>1</sup> that

<sup>1</sup> Or, thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem.

bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

Lift up thy voice with strength,  
O thou that bringest glad tidings to Jerusalem!  
Lift it up; be not afraid;  
Say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

opinion in regard to the meaning of the passage. The margin renders it, "Thou that tellest good tidings to Zion," making Zion the receiver, and not the publisher of the message that was to convey joy. The Vulgate in a similar way renders it, "ascend a high mountain, thou who bringest good tidings to Zion," *qui evangelizas Zion*. So the Chaldee, understanding this as an address to the prophet, as in ver 1, "Ascend a high mountain, ye prophets, who bring glad tidings to Zion." So Lowth, Noyes, Gesenius, Grotius, &c. The word מְבַשֵּׂרִים, *Mēbhāsērēth*, from בָּשַׂר, *Bāsūr*, means cheering with good tidings; announcing good news; bearing joyful intelligence. It is a participle in the feminine gender; and is appropriately applicable to some one that bears good tidings to Zion; and not to Zion as appointed to bear glad tidings. Lowth supposes that it is in the feminine gender, and applicable to some female whose office it was to announce glad tidings, and says that it was the common practice for females to engage in the office of proclaiming good news. On an occasion of a public victory, or rejoicing, it was customary, says he, for females to assemble together, and to celebrate it with songs, and dances, and rejoicings; and he appeals to the instance of Miriam and the chorus of women (Ex. xv. 20, 21), and to the instance where, after the victory of David over Goliath, "all the women came out of the cities of Israel singing and dancing to meet Saul," &c. 1 Sam. xviii. 6. But there are objections to this interpretation. (1.) If this was the sense, the word would have been

in the plural number, since there is no instance in which a female is employed alone in this service; and (2.) It was not, according to this, the office of the female to announce good tidings, or to communicate a joyful message, but to celebrate some occasion of triumph, or victory. Grotius supposes that the word is "feminine in its sound, but common in its signification;" and thus denotes any whose office it was to communicate glad tidings. Gesenius (Comm. in loc.) says, that the feminine form here is used in a collective sense for מְבַשֵּׂרִים, in the plural; and supposes that it thus refers to the prophets, or others who were to announce the glad tidings to Zion. Vitringa coincides with our translation, and supposes that the sense is, that Zion was to make proclamation to the other cities of Judah of the deliverance; that the news was first to be communicated to Jerusalem, and that Jerusalem, as a centre, was intrusted with the office of announcing this to the other cities of the land; and that the meaning is, that the gospel was to be preached first at Jerusalem, and then from Jerusalem, as a centre, to the other cities of the land, agreeably to Luke xxiv. 47, 49. In this view, also, Hengstenberg coincides. Christol. vol. i. 424. But that the former interpretation, which regards Zion as the receiver, and not the promulgator, of the intelligence, is the true one, is apparent, I think, from the following considerations: (1.) It is that which is the obvious and most correct construction of the Hebrew. (2.) It is that which is found in the ancient versions. (3.) It accords with the design of the passage.

10. Behold, the Lord God will | <sup>1</sup> come with strong hand, and his  
<sup>1</sup> Or, against the strong.

NEW TRANSLATION.

10. "Behold the Lord JEHOVAH will come with might,

The main scope of the passage is not to call upon Jerusalem to make known the glad tidings, but it is to convey the good news to Jerusalem; to announce to her, lying desolate and waste, that her hard service was at an end, and that she was to be blessed with the return of JEHOVAH, and with happier and better times. See ver. 2. It would be a departure from this to suppose that the subject was diverted in order to give Jerusalem a command to make the proclamation to the other cities of the land—to say nothing of the impropriety, and unusual notion of the figure of calling on a city to go up into a high mountain, and to lift up its voice.—On the meaning of the word Zion, see Note, ch. i. 8. ¶ *Get thee up into a high mountain.* You who make this proclamation to Zion. The word mountain here is synonymous with an elevated place; a place where a crier could be more distinctly seen, and where he could be better heard. It was not uncommon in ancient times, when a multitude were to be addressed, or a proclamation to be made, for the crier to go into a mountain, where he could be seen and heard. Thus Jotham, addressing the men of Shechem, is said to have gone and "stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice," &c. Judges ix. 7. Comp. Matt. v. 1. The sense is, that the messengers of the joyful news to Zion were to make themselves distinctly heard by all the inhabitants of the city, and of the land. ¶ *O Jerusalem, that bringest,* &c. Or rather, as in the margin, "thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem." ¶ *Lift up thy voice.* As with a glad and important message. Do not deliver the message as if you were afraid that it should be heard. The message is one of joy; and it should be delivered in a clear, decided, animated manner, as if it were true, and as if it were important that it should be heard. ¶ *With strength.* Aloud; with effort; with power. Comp.

ch. xxxv. 3, 4. ¶ *Lift it up.* Lift up the voice. The command is repeated, to denote emphasis. The mind is full of the subject; and the prophet repeats the command, as a man often does when his mind is full of an idea.—This command is one that is not unusual in Isaiah. It requires animation, earnestness, zeal; that the message of God should be delivered as if it were true, and as if it were believed to be true. This will not justify, however, boisterous preaching, or a loud and unnatural tone of voice—alike offensive to good taste, injurious to the health, and destructive of the life of the preacher.—It is to be remarked, also, that *this* command to lift up the voice, appertains to the glad tidings of the gospel, and not to the terrors of wrath; to the proclamation of mercy, and not to the denunciation of woe. The glad tidings of salvation should be delivered in an animated and ardent manner; the future punishment of the wicked, in a tone serious, solemn, subdued, awful. ¶ *Be not afraid.* Fear not to be heard; do not be timid; do not be alarmed for fear of your enemies. ¶ *Say unto the cities of Judah.* Not to Jerusalem only, but to all the cities of the land. They were alike to be blessed on the return from the captivity—alike in the preaching of the gospel. ¶ *Behold your God!* Lo! your God returns to the city, the temple, and the land! Lo! he comes (Note, ver. 3), conducting his people as a king to their land! Lo, he will come—under the Messiah, in future times—to redeem and save. What a glad announcement was this to the desolate and forsaken cities of Judah! What a glad announcement to the wide world, "Lo! God has come to redeem and save! Lo! his tabernacle is with men; and the desolate world shall be visited with his salvation, and smile in his mercy through the Messiah!"

10. Behold, the Lord God will come. Note, ver 3. He will come to deliver

arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward <sup>1</sup> is with him, and <sup>1</sup> his work before him.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 22. 12.

<sup>1</sup> Or, recompence for his work.

NEW TRANSLATION.

And his arm shall rule for himself;  
Behold his reward is with him,  
And his recompence before him.

his people, manifesting all the power which is necessary to rescue them from the dominion of their enemies, and to save them. Applied to the condition of the Jews in exile, this means that God would come to deliver them. Applied to the times of the Messiah, it means that God would manifest himself in a powerful manner as mighty to save.

¶ *With strong hand.* מְרִיבָה, *Behhāzāq.* Margin, "Against the strong." So Vitringa and others understand it; and regard it as referring to the mighty enemies of the people of God, or as Vitringa particularly supposes, to the great foe of God and his people—the prince of darkness—the devil. Lowth also translates it in this manner, "against the strong one." The LXX render it *μετα ισχυρος*, with strength; with majesty. This is the more probable meaning—that the Lord would come with the manifestation of strength and power, able to subdue and vanquish all the enemies of his people, and to effect their complete and final salvation.

¶ *And his arm.* The arm is a symbol of strength and power; because it is by that that we accomplish our purposes; by that a conqueror slays his enemies in battle, &c. Thus Ps. x. 15: "Break thou the arm of the wicked;" i. e., diminish, or destroy his power. Ezek. xxx. 21: "I have broken the arm of Pharaoh, king of Egypt." Comp. Jer. xlviii. 25. Thus it is said of God, Ps. lxxxix. 13: "Thou hast a mighty arm," and Ps. xcvi. 1: "His holy arm hath gotten him the victory." Comp. Ex. vi. 6. The metaphor is taken from the act of stretching out the arm to fight in battle; where the arm is that which is principally conspicuous, and is the effective instrument in subduing an

enemy. ¶ *Shall rule for him.* Lowth renders the phrase, "for him," *†, lō,* "over him:"

And his arm shall prevail over him;

that is, over the strong and mighty foe. The LXX render it *μετα κυριας*—with dominion. But the meaning seems to be, "God is mighty by himself; his power resides in his own arm; he is not dependent on others; he will accomplish the deliverance in such a manner that it shall be seen that he did it alone; and he shall rule for himself, without any aid, and so that it shall be manifest that he is the sovereign. In the deliverance of his people from their captivity, he so directed it, that his own power was apparent, and that it was manifest that he was their deliverer and sovereign; and in the redemption of man, the same thing is apparent, that the arm of God effects the deliverance, and that it is his own power that establishes the dominion. ¶ *Behold, his reward is with him.* He will be ready to confer the appropriate reward on his own people. The idea seems to be taken from the custom of a conqueror, who is in the habit of distributing rewards among his followers and soldiers after a signal victory. This was always done in ancient wars, apparently because it seemed to be an act of justice that those who had gained the victory should share also in the result, and this participation of the booty was a stimulus to future effort, as well as a compensation for their toil and valor. The rewards distributed consisted generally of that which was taken from the conquered; the gold and silver and raiment which were taken; as well as in the captives or slaves. See Gen. xlix. 7; Ex. xv. 9;

11. He shall feed his flock like *them* in his bosom, *and* shall a shepherd: <sup>k</sup> he shall gather the gently lead those that <sup>l</sup> are with lambs with his arm, and carry young.

<sup>k</sup> Ps. 23. 1. John 10. 11.

<sup>l</sup> Or, *give suck*.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

"Like a shepherd shall he feed his flock,  
In his arms shall he gather up the tender lambs,  
And in his bosom shall he carry them,  
The nursing ewes shall he gently lead."

1 Sam. xxx. 26; and particularly Judges v. 30:

Have they not sped?  
Have they not divided the prey;  
To every man a damsel or two;  
To Sisera a prey of divers colors,  
A prey of divers colors of needle-work,  
Of divers colors of needle-work on both sides,  
Meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?

The idea here is, (1.) That **JEHOVAH** would bestow appropriate rewards on his people. (2.) That they would be conferred on his coming, and not be delayed. (3.) That it should be done by the hand of God himself. This language was applicable to the interposition of God to save his people from their long exile, and the "reward" would be ample in the restoration to their own land, and the re-organization of their kingdom, and the re-establishment of his worship. It is applicable in a higher sense to the coming of the Messiah to bless the world. His reward was with him. He blessed his faithful followers on earth; he will bless them more abundantly in heaven. It will be assuredly applicable to him when he shall come to gather his people to himself in the great and last day, and the language before us is used with reference to that, as strikingly applicable. Rev. xxii. 12: "And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." ¶ *And his work.* Marg., "Recompence for his work." The margin here is the correct rendering. The Hebrew word strictly, indeed, denotes work, labor, business; but it also denotes the *wages* for work. Lev. xix. 13; Ps. cix. 20.

11. *He shall feed his flock, &c.* In

the previous verse, the fact has been asserted that God would come to establish his dominion, to subdue his foes, and to reward his people. In this verse, the mild and gentle character of his rule over his people is presented. It would not be that of a tyrant; it would not be that of a conqueror over vanquished subjects; but it would be mild, gentle, kind, tender, like that of a shepherd regarding the interests of his flock, and particularly the wants of the feeble and the afflicted. He is compared to a gentle and tender shepherd, who watches over his flock, and who carries the lambs which are unable to walk in his own arms, and gently leads along the feeble and the delicate. The word translated "shall feed," *יִרְעֶה*, *yir'eh*, denotes more than our word *feed* at present. It refers to all the care of a shepherd over his flock; and means, to tend, to guard, to govern, to provide pasture, to defend from danger, &c., as a shepherd does his flock. It is often applied in the Scriptures to God, represented as the tender shepherd; and especially to the Redeemer. Ps. xxiii. 1; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; John x. 14; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 25; v. 4. It is often applied to a leader, or a ruler of a people. 2 Sam. v. 2; vii. 7; Jer. xxiii. 2. Thus Homer often uses the phrase *ποιμήν λαών*—shepherd of the people, to denote a ruler, or monarch. Here *κ* denotes that God would evince towards his people the same tender care, guardianship, and protection which a shepherd shows for his flock. He would defend them from danger, guard them from enemies, lead them in the path of plenty and safety, provide for their

wants, and evince a tender regard for the feeble and the delicate. ¶ *He shall gather the lambs with his arm.* This is a most beautiful expression, denoting the tender care of God the Saviour for the feeblest and weakest of his people; and for the young and feeble in years and piety. This is often done by a shepherd. The tender lamb would be unable to keep up with the flock; would become weary and exhausted; and the shepherd would naturally take it in his arms, and carry it. This may be seen often in our own country. Such a shepherd as this Virgil beautifully describes:

“En, ipse capellas  
Protendens ager ago: hanc etiam vix, Tityre,  
duco:  
Hic inter densas corymbos modò namque gemellos,  
Spem gregis, Ah! silice in nudâ connixa reliquet.”  
ECLOG. l. 12.

“Lo! I my goats urge fainting o’er the mead;  
This, feebler than the rest, with pains I lead.  
Yean’d ’mid yon herds upon the flinty plain,  
Her dying twins, my flock’s late hope, remain.”  
WRANGHAM.

¶ *And shall gently lead, &c. Marg., “Or, give suck.”* This is the more correct translation. It denotes the dams of the flock; those that would be easily exhausted by being overdriven, and of which there was, therefore, especial care necessary. Thus Jacob says to his brother Esau, Gen. xxxiii. 13: “The flocks and the herds with young are with me, and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die.” Of the necessity of such care and attention there is abundant evidence, and, indeed, it is manifest at a glance. Dr. Shaw, speaking of the exposure of the flocks in Syria, says: “The greatest skill and vigilance, and even tender care, are required in the management of such immense flocks as wander on the Syrian plains. Their prodigious numbers compel the keepers to remove them too frequently in search of fresh pastures, which proves very destructive to the young that have not strength to follow.” The following extract from Anderson’s Tour through Greece will also serve to illustrate this passage: “One of the great delights in travel-

ling through a pastoral country is to see and feel the force of the beautiful imagery in the Scriptures, borrowed from pastoral life. All day long the shepherd attends his flock, leading them into ‘green pastures,’ near fountains of water, and chooses a convenient place for them to ‘rest at noon.’ At night, he drives them near his tent; and if there is danger, encloses them in the fold. They know his voice, and follow him. When travelling, he tenderly watches over them; and carries such as are exhausted in his arms. Such a shepherd is the Lord Jesus Christ.” The following quotation from Roberts, in regard to the custom among the Hindoos, will serve still further to illustrate this beautiful passage: “The pastoral office in the East is far more responsible than in England, and it is only by looking at it in its various relations and peculiarities as it exists there, that we gain a correct view of many passages of Scripture. Flocks, at home, are generally in fine fields, surrounded by hedges or fences; but there they are generally in the wilderness, and were it not for the shepherd, would go astray and be exposed to the wild beasts. As the sons of Jacob had to go to a great distance to feed their flocks, so still they are often absent for one or two months together, in the place where there is plenty of pasturage. In their removals it is an interesting sight to see the shepherds carrying the lambs in their bosoms, and also to witness how gently they ‘lead those that are with young.’” No description could more beautifully describe the character of the Redeemer. In the New Testament, he is often described as a shepherd, tender and kind, and regarding the welfare of all his flock, and as ready to give his life for them. John x. 7, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 25; v. 4. We are here, also, strikingly reminded of the solemn command which he gave to Peter, evincing his tender regard for his flock, “Feed my lambs;” “Feed my sheep.” John xxi. 15—17. It proves in regard to the Redeemer, (1.) That his nature is mild, and gentle, and tender; (2.) That he has a kind regard for all his flock, and

12. Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a <sup>1</sup>measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

<sup>1</sup> tierce.

TRANSLATION.

12. Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,  
And meted out the heavens with his span,  
And gathered the dust of the earth in a measure,  
And weighed the mountains in scales,  
And the hills in a balance?

will consult the real interest of all, as a shepherd does of his flock. (3.) That he has a special solicitude for the feeble and infirm, and that they will be the objects of his tender care; and (4.) That he feels a particular interest in the young. He knows their feebleness; he is acquainted with their temptations; he sees the importance of their being trained up with care; and he looks with deep interest, therefore, on all the efforts made to guard them from the ways of sin, and to train them up for his service. Comp. Note ch. xlii. 3.

12. *Who hath measured, &c.* The object in this and the following verses, to ver. 26, is evidently to show the greatness, power, and majesty of God, by strong contrast with his creatures, and more especially with idols. Perhaps the prophet designed to meet and answer an implied objection; that the work of deliverance was so great that it could not be accomplished. God had made all things; he was infinitely great; he had entire control over all the nations; and he could therefore remove all the obstacles in the way, and accomplish his great and gracious purposes. By man it could not be done; nor had idol gods any power to do it; but the Creator and upholder of all could effect this purpose with infinite ease. At the same time that the *argument* here is one that is entirely conclusive, the passage, regarded as a description of the power and majesty of God, is one of vast sublimity and grandeur; nor is there any portion of the sacred volume that is more fitted to impress the mind with a sense of the majesty and glory of

JEHOVAH. The question, "who hath measured," &c., is designed to imply that the thing referred to here was that which had never been done, and could never be done by man, but that it had been done by God; and the *argument* is, that although that which the prophet predicted was a work which surpassed human power, yet it could be done by that God who had measured the waters in the hollow of his hand. The word "waters" here refers, evidently, to the vast collection of waters in the deep—the mighty ocean; together with all the waters in the running streams, and in the clouds. See Gen. i. 6, where the firmament is said to have been made to divide the waters from the waters. A reference to the waters above the heavens occurs in Ps. cxlviii. 4:

Praise him, ye heavens of heavens,  
And ye waters that be above the heavens.

And in Prov. xxx. 4, a similar description of the power and majesty of God occurs:

Who hath gathered the wind in his fists?  
Who hath bound the waters in a garment?  
Who hath established all the ends of the earth?

And in Job xxvi. 8:

He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds;  
And the cloud is not rent under them.

The word *waters* here, therefore, may include all the waters on the earth, and in the sky. The words, "the hollow of his hand," mean, properly, the hand as it is closed, forming a hollow, or a cavity by which water can be taken up. Jerome, however, understands it of the *little finger*; but the more correct sen-

13. Who <sup>1</sup> hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or *being* <sup>1</sup> his counsellor hath taught him?

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 11. 34.

<sup>1</sup> man of his counsel.

NEW TRANSLATION.

13. Who hath directed the Spirit of JEHOVAH?  
Or, as being one of his counsel, hath taught him?

dering is that of the hollow, or palm of the hand. The idea is, that God can take up the vast oceans, and all the waters in the lakes, streams, and clouds, in the palm of his hand, as we take up the smallest quantity in ours. ¶ *And meted out heaven.* The word rendered "meted," i. e., measured, (מָדָה) means, properly, to stand erect, to set up, or make erect; to found, fit, adjust, dispose, form, create. It usually has the idea of *fitting* or disposing. The word *span* (מִרְיָה) denotes the space from the end of the thumb to the end of the middle finger when extended—usually about nine inches. The idea is, probably, that JEHOVAH was able to compass or grasp the heavens, though so vast, as one can compass or measure a small object with the span. He is so much more vast than the immense universe, that he can grasp all the heavens with his hand—or the simple opening of his hand extends from one limit to the other. What an illustration of the vastness and illimitable nature of God! ¶ *And comprehended.* And measured, (מָדָה, from מָדָה, to hold or contain.) 1 Kings viii. 27: "Lo, the heavens, and the heavens of heavens cannot contain thee." ¶ *The dust of the earth.* All the earth; all the dust that composes the globe. ¶ *In a measure.* מִשְׁלָלוֹשׁ, *bāshlālōsh*. Probably *three*; and then the third part of anything. Jerome supposes that it means the *three fingers*, and that it means that God takes up all the dust of the earth in the first three fingers of the hand. But the more probable signification is, that the word denotes that which was the *third part* of some other measure, as of an Ephah, or Bath. In Ps. lxxx. 5, the word is used to denote a large measure.

Thou feedest them with the bread of tears. And givest them tears to drink in great measure.

The idea is plain. It is, that God is so great that he can measure all the dust of the earth as easily as we can measure a small quantity of grain with a measure. ¶ *And weighed the mountains in scales.* The idea here is substantially the same. It is that God is so great and mighty, that he can weigh the lofty mountains, and the hills, as we weigh a light object in scales, or in a balance; and perhaps, also, that he has disposed them on the earth as if he had weighed them out, and adapted them to their proper places and situations. Throughout this entire passage, there is not only the idea of majesty and power in God, but there is also the idea that he has *fitted* or adjusted everything by his wisdom and power, and adapted it to the condition and wants of his creatures.

13. *Who hath directed.* This passage is quoted by Paul in Rom. xi. 34, and referred to by him in 1 Cor. ii. 16. The word rendered "directed" here (יָרָה, *thikkēn*) is the same which is used in the previous verse, "and meted out heaven." The idea here is, "Who has fitted, or disposed the mind or spirit of JEHOVAH? What supreme being has ordered, instructed, or disposed his understanding? Who has *qualified* him for the exercise of his wisdom, or for the formation and execution of his plans?" And the sense is, God is supreme. He has no superior. No one has instructed or guided him, but his plans are his own, and have all been performed by himself alone. And as those plans are infinitely wise, and as he is not dependent on any one for their formation or execution, his people may have confidence in him, and believe that he will be able to exe-

14. With whom took he counsel,  
and *who* <sup>1</sup> instructed him, and  
taught him in the path of judg-  
ment, and taught him knowledge,  
and shewed to him the way of <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> made him understand. <sup>2</sup> understandings?

15. Behold, the nations *are* as  
a drop of a bucket, and are counted  
as the small dust of the balance:  
behold, he taketh up the isles as a  
very little thing.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

14. With whom took he counsel, and he taught him,  
And instructed him in the path of judgment,  
And taught him knowledge,  
And showed him the way of understanding?

15. Behold the nations are a drop from the bucket,  
And are regarded as the small dust of the balance;  
Behold, the isles are like the dust which is taken up [by the wind].

cute his purposes. *The Spirit.* The word "spirit" is used in the Bible in perhaps a greater variety of senses than almost any other word. It seems here to be used in the sense of mind; and to refer to God himself. There is no evidence that it refers to the Holy Spirit particularly. The word "spirit" he uses, says Calvin, "for reason, judgment, ornament. He borrows the similitude from the nature of men, in order that he may more accommodate himself to them; nor, as it seems to me, does he here speak of the essential Spirit of God." Comm. in loco. The idea is, Who has been the counsellor of JEHOVAH? And the design of the prophet is, not to refer to the distinction in the Divine nature, or to illustrate the peculiar characteristics of the different persons of the God-head; but it is to set forth the wisdom of JEHOVAH HIMSELF, the one infinite God, as contradistinguished from idols, and as qualified, therefore, to guide, govern, and deliver his people. The passage should not be used, therefore, as a proof-text in regard to the existence and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, but is fitted to demonstrate only that God is *untaught*; and that he is independent, and infinite in his wisdom. ¶ *Or* being *his counsellor*, &c. Marg., as in the Hebrew, "Man of his counsel." He is not dependent for counsel on men or angels. He is supreme, independent, and infinite. None is qualified to instruct him; and all, therefore, should

confide in his infinite wisdom and knowledge.

14. *With whom took he counsel, &c.* The sentiment of the former verse is repeated here, in order, probably, to make it more emphatic. Such a manner of giving emphasis, or of dwelling on an important idea, is very common in the prophets. The sentiment is, that *no one* has given God counsel; that he is independent; that all wisdom originates from him; and that, therefore, his people may put confidence in a God who is well-qualified to direct the affairs of his vast dominions. ¶ *In the path of judgment.* The way of judging correctly and wisely; or the way of administering justice. It denotes here, probably, his boundless wisdom as it is seen in the various arrangements of his creation and providence, by which all things are well disposed, keep their places, and accomplish his vast designs. God is original and independent; he is infinitely wise, and he is qualified, therefore, to instruct and guide his people; and his wisdom should secure their confidence.

15. *Behold, the nations.* All the nations of the earth. This is designed to show the greatness of God, in comparison with that which strikes man as great and vast—a great and mighty nation. And the main object seems to be, to show that God could accomplish his purposes without their aid, and that they could not resist him in the



16. And Lebanon is not sufficient thereof sufficient for a burnt offering to burn, nor the beasts offering.

NEW TRANSLATION.

16. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn,  
Nor its beasts for a burnt-offering.

execution of his plans. If they were as nothing in comparison with him, how easily could he execute his purposes. If they were as nothing, how little could they resist the execution of his plans. ¶ *Are as a drop of a bucket.* In comparison with him; or are so esteemed by him. That is, they are as nothing in comparison with God.—The drop that falls from the bucket in drawing water is a trifle. It has no power; and compared with the waters of the ocean it is as nothing. So small is the power of the nations in comparison with God. ¶ *And are counted.* Are thought of, regarded, esteemed by him, or in comparison with him. ¶ *As the small dust of the balance.* The small, fine dust which collects on the best finished and most accurate balance or scales, and which has no effect in making the scales uneven, or making either side preponderate. Nothing can be a more striking representation of the fact that the nations are regarded as nothing in comparison with God. ¶ *Behold, he taketh up the isles.* Or he is able to do it; he could remove the isles as the fine dust is driven before the whirlwind. A more literal translation of this passage would be, "Lo, the isles are as the dust which is taken up," or which one takes up; i. e., which is taken up, and carried away by the wind. There is something unusual in the expression that God takes up the isles, and the idea is rather that the isles in his sight are regarded as the fine dust which the wind sweeps away. So the Chaldee renders it, "Lo, the isles are like ashes, which the wind drives away." The word "isles" Vitranga and Jerome regard as denoting, not the small portions of land in the sea that are surrounded by water, but lands which are encompassed and enclosed by rivers, like Mesopotamia. But there is no reason why it should not be taken here in its usual signification, as denoting the

islands of the sea. They would serve well to be used in connexion with mountains and hills in setting forth the vast power of God. ¶ *As a very little thing.* *ܡܕܕܩܐ, hūddāq.* The word *ܡܕܩܐ, dāq*, means that which is beaten small or fine; and then fine dust, chaff, or any light thing which the wind easily sweeps away.

16. *And Lebanon.* Mount Lebanon. The expression here refers to the trees or the cedars of Lebanon. Thus it is rendered by the Chaldee. "And the trees of Lebanon." For a description of Lebanon, see Note on ch. x. 34. The design of this verse is obvious. Lebanon was celebrated for its lofty cedars, which at that time grew there in great abundance. 1 Kings, v. 6, 8, 9, 14, 15. It is probable that the word *Lebanon* here is not used in the limited sense in which it is sometimes employed, to denote a single mountain, or a single range of mountains, but includes the entire ranges lying north of Palestine, and which were comprehended under the general name of Libanus. The idea here is, that all these ranges of mountains, abounding in magnificent trees and forests, would not furnish fuel sufficient to burn the sacrifices which would be an appropriate offering to the majesty and glory of God. He is so great, and so glorious, that no sacrifice which could thus be offered, were all Lebanon on fire, and all its beasts consumed as an offering, would be an appropriate expression of his greatness. ¶ *To burn.* To burn for the purpose of consuming the sacrifice. ¶ *Nor the beasts thereof.* As the mountains of Lebanon were extensive forests, they would abound with wild animals. The idea is, that all those animals, if offered in sacrifice, would not be an appropriate expression of what was due to God. ¶ *For a burnt offering.* A holocaust, a sacrifice. In this offering, the entire animal was consumed. It may be remarked here, if

17. All nations before him *are* <sup>m</sup> as nothing; and they are counted to him less than <sup>n</sup> nothing, and vanity.

18. To whom then will ye liken

God? or what likeness <sup>o</sup> will ye compare unto him?

19. The workman <sup>p</sup> melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

<sup>m</sup> Dan. 4. 35.

<sup>n</sup> Ps. 62. 9.

<sup>o</sup> Acts 17. 29.

<sup>p</sup> ch. 41. 6, 7; 44. 12, &c.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

17. All nations before him are as nothing;  
They are regarded by him as less than nothing and vanity.  
18. To whom then will ye liken God?  
And what resemblance will ye prepare for him?  
19. The workman casteth an image;  
And the smith overlayeth it with plates of gold,  
And forms for it chains of silver.

all the vast forests of Lebanon on fire, and all its animals consumed as an offering to God, were not worthy of him, or sufficient to show forth his glory, how little can our praises express the proper sense of his majesty and honor! How profound should be our reverence for God!—how deep our sense of his majesty! With what awful reverence should we come before him! The image employed here by Isaiah is one of great poetic beauty; and nothing, perhaps, could give a deeper impression of the majesty and honor of the great JEHOVAH.

17. *Are as nothing.* This expresses literally what had been expressed by the beautiful and striking imagery above. ¶ *Less than nothing.* A strong hyperbolic expression, denoting the utter insignificance of the nations as compared with God. Such expressions are common in the Scriptures. ¶ *And vanity.* Emptiness, חֲלוּהָ, *thōhū*, the word which in Gen. i. 2, is rendered “without form.”

18. *To whom then will ye liken God?* Since he is so great, so infinite, what can resemble him? What is there that is like him? What form can be made like him? The main idea here intended to be conveyed by the prophet evidently is, that God is great and glorious, and worthy of the confidence of his people. Nothing can be a proper representation of him; nothing can be made that is like him. This idea he

illustrates by a reference to the attempts which had been made to make a representation of him, and by showing how vain those efforts were. He therefore states the way in which the images of idols were usually formed, and shows how absurd it was to suppose that they could be any real representation of the true God. It is possible that this was composed in the time of Manasseh, when idolatry prevailed to a great extent in Judah, and that the prophet intended in this manner incidentally to show the folly and absurdity of it.

19. *The workman.* This word denotes an artificer of any kind, and is applied to one who engraved on wood or stone, Ex. xxviii. 11; to a workman in iron, brass, stone, wood, Ex. xxxv. 35; Deut. xxvii. 15; or an artizan, or artificer in general. It here refers manifestly to a man who worked in brass or other metals—in the metals of which idols were commonly made. Those idols were sometimes made of wood, sometimes of clay, but more frequently, as they are at present in India, of metal. It became, undoubtedly, a regular trade or business thus to make idol gods. ¶ *Melteth.* Casts or founds. ¶ *A graven image.* חָפֶּז, *chāpēz*. This word commonly denotes an image carved or graven from wood, Ex. xx. 4; Judg. xvii. 3; Isa. xliv. 15, 17; but it is also frequently applied to a molten image, or one that is cast from metals. Jer. x. 14; li. 17. It

20. He that <sup>1</sup>is so impoverished unto him a cunning workman to that he hath no oblation chooseth prepare a graven image, *that* shall a tree *that* will not rot; he seeketh not be moved.

<sup>1</sup> is poor of oblation.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

20. He that is too poor to make a costly oblation  
Chooseth wood that will not rot;  
He seeketh for himself a skilful artist  
To prepare an image that shall not be moved.

is used in this sense here; as there is an incongruity in the idea of *casting*, or melting a *graven* image. ¶ *And the goldsmith spreadeth*, &c. Idols were frequently overlaid with gold or silver. Those which were in the temples of the gods were probably commonly made in this way, and probably those also which were made for private use, as far as it could be afforded. The word here rendered "goldsmith," however, does not of necessity mean a worker in gold, but a smith in general, or one who was employed to melt or smelt metals, a worker in any kind of metals. ¶ *And casteth silver chains*. For the idol. These were not to fasten it, but were for the purpose of ornament. The general principle seems to have been to decorate their idols with that which was regarded as the highest ornament among the people; and as chains were used in abundance as a part of their personal ornaments among the Orientals (see Notes on ch. iii.), so they made use of the same kind of ornaments for their idols. The idols of the Hindoos now are lavishly decorated in this manner.

20. *He that is so impoverished*. So poor. So it is generally agreed that the word here used is to be understood, though interpreters have not been entirely agreed in regard to its signification. The LXX render the phrase, "The carpenter chooseth a sound piece of wood," &c. The Chaldee, "He cuts down an ash, a tree which will not rot." The Vulgate, "Perhaps he chooses a tree which is incorruptible." Jarchi renders it, "He who is accustomed to examine, and to judge between the wood which is durable and other

wood," &c. But the signification of the word (from שָׁכַח, *sākhān*, to dwell, to be familiar with any one) given to it by our translators, is probably the correct one, that of being too poor to make a costly oblation. This notion of poverty, Gesenius supposes, is derived from the notion of *being seated*; and thence of sinking down from languor or debility; and hence of poverty or want. ¶ *That he hath no oblation*. No offering; no sacrifice; no rich gift. He is too poor to make a costly oblation; too poor, the sense seems to be, to make such an offering to his god as would be implied in an idol of brass or other metal, richly overlaid with plates of gold, and decorated with silver chains. In verse 19, the design seems to have been to describe the more rich and costly idols that were made; in this, to describe those that were made by the poor who were unable to offer such as were made of brass and gold. The word "oblation," therefore, *i. e.*, *offering*, in this place, does not denote an offering made to the true God, but an offering made to an idol, such as an image was regarded to be. He could not afford a rich offering, and was constrained to make one of wood. ¶ *Chooseth a tree that will not rot*. Wood that will be durable and permanent. Perhaps the idea is, that as he could not afford one of metal, he would choose that which would be the most valuable which he could make—a piece of wood that was durable, and that would thus show his regard. Or possibly the sense may be, that he designed it should not be moved; that he expressed a fixed and settled determination to adhere to the worship of the idol; that he had no

21. Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

. 19. 1. Acts 14. 17. Rom. 1. 19, 20.

r Rom. 3. 1, 2.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

21. Have ye not known?  
Have ye not heard?  
Hath it not been announced to you from the beginning?  
Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

idea of changing his religion, and that the permanency and durability of the wood would be regarded as a somewhat more acceptable expression of his worship. ¶ *A cunning workman.* Heb., "A wise artificer;" a man skilled in the art of carving, and of making images. ¶ *A graven image.* An image engraved or cut from wood, in contradistinction from one that is molten, or made from metals. ¶ *That shall not be moved.* That shall be fixed and permanent. That shall not decay, but that shall stand long as the expression of his devotion to the service of the idol. The wood that was commonly employed for this purpose, as being most durable, as we learn from ch. xlv. 14, was the cedar, the cypress, or the oak. See the Note in that place. The phrase, "shall not be moved," does not refer so much to its being fixed in one place, as to its durability and permanency.

21. *Have ye not known?* This is evidently an address to the worshippers of idols, and designed to be addressed to the Jews themselves in the times of Manasseh, when idolatry abounded, or to all idolaters. The prophet had in the previous verses shown the manner in which the idols were made, and the folly of regarding them as objects of worship. He now turns and addresses the worshippers of these idols, as being foolish, and as without excuse. They might have known that these were not the true God. They had had abundant opportunity of learning his existence, and of becoming acquainted with his majesty and glory. Tradition had informed them of this, and the creation of the earth demonstrated his greatness and power. The prophet, therefore,

asks them whether they had not known this? Whether their conduct was the result of ignorance? And the question implies emphatically that they *had* known, or had abundant opportunity to know of the existence and majesty of God. The question is equivalent to an affirmation that they *had* known better, and were acquainted with the fact that there was one God, and that he was a Being who could not be represented by idols. This was emphatically true of the Jews, and yet they were constantly falling into idolatrous worship. ¶ *Have ye not heard?* Has it not been handed down by tradition from your ancestors that there is one God who is the Creator and upholder of all things? ¶ *From the beginning?* Heb., "From the head," i. e., from the very commencement of the world. Has it not been communicated by tradition, from age to age, that there is one God, and that he is the Creator and upholder of all things? This was particularly the case with the Jews, who had had this knowledge from the very commencement of their history, and they were, therefore, entirely without excuse in their tendencies to idolatry. ¶ *From the foundations of the earth?* Have you not learned the existence and greatness of God from the foundation of the earth—from the fact that the world has been made, and that it demonstrates the existence and perfection of God? The sacred writers often speak of the earth as resting on a foundation, as upheld, &c.

For he hath founded it upon the seas,  
And established it upon the floods.

Ps. xxiv. 2. See also Prov. viii. 29. Perhaps here, however, the word

22. *It*<sup>1</sup> is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as

<sup>1</sup> Or, *Him that sitteth.*

hoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

<sup>2</sup> Job 9. 8.

NEW

22. It is He who sitteth above the circle of the earth,  
And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;  
Who stretcheth out the heavens as a thin canopy,  
And spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.

"foundation" refers rather to the time than to the manner in which the earth is made, and corresponds to the phrase, "from the beginning;" and the sense may be, "Has it not been understood ever since the earth was founded, or made? Has not the tradition of the existence and perfections of God been unbroken, and constant?" The argument is, that the existence and greatness of God were fully known by tradition and by his works; that they were inexcusable for their idolatry; and that it was absurd to attempt to form an image of that God who had laid the foundations of the world.

22. It is *he that sitteth*. Marg., "Him that sitteth;" i. e., Have you not known Him? The Hebrew literally means, "the sitter, or he sitting on the circle of the earth;" and it may be connected either with ver. 21, "Have ye not known him sitting on the circle of the earth?" or it may be connected with ver. 18, "What likeness will ye compare to him that sitteth on the circle of the earth?" In either case, the phrase is designed to show the majesty and glory of God. The word *sitteth* refers to God as a sovereign or monarch, making the circle of the earth his throne. ¶ *The circle of the earth*. Or rather, *above* (על, *al*) the circle of the earth. The word rendered circle (דָּוָר) denotes a circle, sphere, or arch; and is applied to the arch or vault of the heavens, in Prov. viii. 27; Job xxii. 14. The phrase, "circle, or circuit of the earth," here seems to be used in the same sense as the phrase *orbis terrarum*, by the Latins; not as denoting a sphere, or not as implying that the earth was a globe;

but conceived as an extended plain surrounded by oceans and mighty waters. The globular form of the earth was then unknown; and the idea is, that God sat *above* this extended circuit, or circle; that he was far exalted over it all; and that the vast earth was, as it were, his seat. Or perhaps, that he sat far above in heaven, and that the circle of the earth was his footstool. See ch. lxvi. 1: "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." Comp. Matt. v. 34; Acts xvii. 24; 2 Chron. vi. 18. A similar sentiment occurs in Ps. cxliii. 5, 6:

Who is like unto *Jehovah* our God,  
Who dwelleth on high;  
Who humbleth himself to behold the things  
that are in heaven,  
And in the earth.

¶ *And the inhabitants thereof*. Of the earth, of all the world. ¶ *Are as grasshoppers*. Or rather, like locusts, for so the Hebrew word properly means. This is designed to show that the inhabitants of the earth, numerous and mighty as they are, are as nothing compared with God. They are insignificant, and unworthy of his notice. The idea is that God is so exalted, sitting so far above the earth, that as he looks down from that elevated station, all the inhabitants of the world appear to him as locusts—a busy, agitated, moving, impatient multitude, spread over the vast circle of the earth beneath him—as locusts spread in almost interminable bands over the plains in the East. What a striking illustration of the insignificance of man as he is viewed from the heavens! What an impressive description of the unimportance of his mighty plans, and of the *vanity* of his

23. That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

1 Job 12. 21. Ps. 107. 40.

24. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown. yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he

NEW TRANSLATION.

23. Who reduceth the princes to nothing;  
The rulers of the earth he maketh to be as vanity.  
24. Yea they shall not be planted;  
Yea they shall not be sown;

mightiest works! ¶ *That stretcheth out the heavens.* Referring to the firmament above, as that seems to be stretched out, or expanded, over our heads. The heavens above are often thus compared to an expanse—either solid (Gen. i. 7), or to a curtain, or tent (comp. Note, ch. xxxiv. 4). ¶ *As a curtain.* The word here used (פָּרֹכֶת) denotes properly fineness, thinness; and then a fine or thin cloth, or curtain. Here it means a thin canopy that is stretched over us. The same expression occurs in Ps. civ. 2. Comp. Isa. xlv. 24; Job ix. 8.—Probably the reference here is to the veil, curtain, or awning which the Orientals are accustomed to draw over the court in their houses. Their houses are constructed with an open court in the centre, with the rooms ranged round it. In that court or open square there are usually fountains, if the situation is so that they can be constructed; and they are cool and refreshing places for the family to sit in the heat of the summer. In hot or rainy weather, a curtain or awning is drawn over this area. According to the image of the prophet here, the heavens are spread out over our heads as such an awning. ¶ *And spreadeth them out as a tent, &c.* As a tent that is made for a habitation. Perhaps the idea is, that the heavens are extended like a tent in order to furnish a dwelling-place for God, as men expand a tent for their habitation. Thus the Chaldee renders it. If so, it proves that the universe so vast was fitted up to be the dwelling-place of the High and Holy One, and is a most impressive representation of his immensity.

23. *That bringeth the princes to nothing.* That is, all princes and kings.

No matter how great their power, their wealth, and their dignity, they are, by his hand, reduced to nothing before him. Their power and splendour are taken away, and they are brought down to the dust. The design of this passage is to contrast the majesty of God with that of princes and nobles, and to show how far he excels them all. The general truth is, therefore, stated that all monarchs are by him removed from their thrones, and consigned to nothing. The same idea is expressed in Job xii. 21:

He poureth contempt upon princes,  
And weakeneth the strength of the mighty  
And in Ps. cvii. 40:

He poureth contempt upon princes,  
And causeth them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way.

The particular idea here, as appears from the next verse, is, that the princes and rulers who are opposed to God are reduced to nothing before him. They constitute no real resistance to the execution of his purposes. He can easily remove them out of the way. He can strip off their honors and glory, and obliterate even their names. ¶ *He maketh the judges of the earth.* Kings and princes often executed judgment personally, and hence the words, judges and kings, seem to be synonymous, as they are used here and in Ps. ii. 10.

Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings;  
Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

The word is here used in the sense of rulers. ¶ *As vanity.* As nothing. He takes away their strength, and power, and glory, when they would resist and oppose him.

24. *Yea, they shall not be planted.* The kings and rulers—especially they who oppose God in the execution of his pur-

shall also blow upon them, and | wind shall take them away as  
they shall wither, and the whirl- | stubble.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

Yea their stem shall not take root in the ground;  
And also he shall blow upon them, and they shall wither,  
And the whirlwind shall bear them away as stubble.

poses. The idea in this verse is, that their name and family should become extinct in the same way as a tree does from which no shoot starts up. Although they should be great and mighty, like the tree that sends out far-spreading branches, and strikes its root deep, and that appears majestic and grand, yet God would so utterly destroy them that they should have no posterity; their magnificence should cease; and their family become extinct. Princes and kings are often compared to lofty and majestic trees of the forest. Comp. Ps. xxxvii. 35; Dan. iv. 20—22. And the idea is, here, that they and their families should be entirely cut off from the earth. Vitringa supposes that wicked rulers are particularly intended here, and that the idea is, that the enemies of God and his cause, the wicked princes that persecuted his people, should be entirely extinct on the earth. He refers particularly to Pharaoh, to Antiochus Epiphanes, Nero, Domitian, Decius, Gallus, Galerius, Maximus, Maximinus, and some others, as instances of this kind, whose families soon became extinct. It may be remarked, in general, that the families of monarchs and princes become extinct usually much sooner than others. The fact may be owing in part to the usual luxury and vice in the families of the great, and in part to the direct arrangements of God, by which he designs that power shall not be for ever perpetuated in one family or line. The *general* idea in the passage is, that earthly princes and rulers are as nothing when compared with God; and that he can easily destroy their families and their name. But there is no improbability in the supposition of Vitringa, that the prophet refers particularly to the *enemies* of God and his cause, and that he intends specifically and particularly to affirm that none of these enemies

could prevent or embarrass the execution of his purposes—since with infinite ease he could entirely destroy their name. ¶ *They shall not be sown.* The same idea under another figure. The former referred to princes under the image of a tree; this refers to them under the image of grain that is sown. The idea is the same—that their family and name should be annihilated, and should not spring up in a future generation. The same image is presented in Nahum, in respect to the king of Assyria, ch. i. 14: “The LORD hath given commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown;” that is, that thy name and family should become entirely extinct. ¶ *Yea, their stock.* Their stem—referring to the stump or stock of a tree. When a tree is cut down, the roots often still live, and send up shoots, or suckers, that grow into trees. Posterity is often, in the Scriptures, compared to such suckers or shoots from old and decayed trees. See Notes on ch. xi. 1. The meaning here is, that as when a tree falls and dies without sending up any shoots, so princes should die. They should have no descendants; no one of their family to sit on their thrones. ¶ *Shall also blow upon them.* As God sends a blast or a tempest upon the forest, and uproots the loftiest trees, and sweeps them away, so he will sweep away the families of princes. Or rather, perhaps, the idea here is, that God sends a strong and burning east wind, and withers up everything before it. See this wind described in the Notes on ch. xxxvii. 26. ¶ *And they shall wither.* Trees and shrubs and plants are dried up before that poisonous and fiery wind—the Simoom—and so it would be with the princes before the blast of JEHOVAH. ¶ *And the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.* This, in its literal signification,

25. To whom <sup>u</sup> then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal?  
 it. 4. 23, &c. saith the Holy One.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

25. To whom, then, will ye liken me?

means that the whirlwind bears away the trees of the forest, sweeping them all away, and with the same violence and ease God would sweep away the families of the kings and princes that opposed him and oppressed his people. It may illustrate this to observe, that the effects of whirlwinds in the east are often much more violent than they are with us, and that they bear away to a great distance often the branches of trees, and even the trees themselves. The following description of a whirlwind observed by Mr. Bruce may serve to illustrate this passage, as well as the passage in Ps. lxxxiii. 13 :

O my God, make them like a wheel;  
 As the stubble before the wind,

referring to the rotary action of the whirlwind, which often impels straw like a wheel set in rapid motion. "Mr. Bruce, in his journey through the desert of Senaar, had the singular felicity to contemplate this wonderful phenomenon in all its terrific majesty, without injury, although with considerable danger and alarm. In that vast expanse of desert from west and to north-west of him, he saw a number of prodigious pillars of sand at different distances, moving at times with great celerity, at others, stalking on with majestic slowness; at intervals he thought they were coming, in a very few minutes, to overwhelm him and his companion. Again, they would retreat so as to be almost out of sight, their tops reaching to the very clouds. There the tops often separated from the bodies; and these, once disjoined, dispersed in the air, and appeared no more. Sometimes they were broken near the middle, as if struck with a large cannon-shot. About noon, they began to advance with considerable swiftness upon them, the wind being very strong at north. Eleven of these awful visitors ranged alongside of them, about the distance of three miles. The greatest diameter of the largest appeared

to him, at that distance, as if it would measure ten feet. They retired from them with a wind at south-east, leaving an impression upon the mind of our intrepid traveller to which he could give no name, though he candidly admits that one ingredient in it was fear, with a considerable deal of wonder and astonishment. He declares it was in vain to think of flying; the swiftest horse, or fastest sailing ship, could be of no use to carry them out of this danger; and the full persuasion of this riveted him to the spot where he stood. Next day, they were gratified with a similar display of moving pillars, in form and disposition like those already described, only they seemed to be more in number and less in size. They came several times in a direction close upon them; that is, according to Mr. Bruce's computation, within less than two miles. They became, immediately after sunrise, like a thick wood, and almost darkened the sun; his rays shining through them, for near an hour, gave them an appearance of pillars of fire. At another time, they were terrified by an army (as it seemed) of these sand pillars, whose march was constantly south; a number of which seemed once to be coming directly upon them; and though they were little nearer than two miles, a considerable quantity of sand fell around them. On the twenty-first of November, about eight in the morning, he had a view of the desert to the westward, as before, and the sands had already begun to rise in immense twisted pillars, which darkened the heavens, and moved over the desert with more magnificence than ever. The sun, shining through the pillars, which were thicker, and contained more sand, apparently, than on any of the preceding days, seemed to give those nearest them an appearance as if spotted with stars of gold." PAXTON.

25. To whom then, &c. See ver. 18.



26. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth

\* them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power; not one faileth.

• Ps. 147. 4.

NEW TRANSLATION.

And [to whom] shall I be equalled?  
Saith the Holy One.

26. Lift up your eyes on high;  
And see who hath created these.  
He leadeth forth their armies by number;  
He calleth them all by name,  
Through the greatness of his strength  
And the mightiness of his power;  
Not one faileth.

The prophet having thus set forth the majesty and glory of God, asks now with great emphasis, what God *could* be likened to? What *could* be an adequate and proper representation of such a God? And if God was such a Being, how great was the folly of idolatry, and how vain all their confidence in the gods which their own hands had made.

26. *Lift up your eyes on high.* Direct your eyes toward heaven, and in the contemplation of the wonders of the starry world, and of God's power and agency there, learn the evidence of his greatness, and of his ability to destroy his foes and to save his friends. Lowth connects this verse with the former, and renders it:

Saith the Holy One,  
Lift up your eyes on high, &c.

The words "on high" here are evidently synonymous with heaven, and refer to the starry worlds. The design of the passage is to convince them of the folly of idolatry, and of the power and majesty of the true God. It is a proof of man's elevated nature that he can thus look upward, and trace the evidences of the power and wisdom of God in the heavens; that he can raise his eyes and thoughts above the earth, and fix his attention on the works of God in distant worlds; and in the number, the order, the greatness and the harmony of the heavenly bodies, trace the proofs of the infinite greatness, goodness, and wisdom of God. Man alone of all the creatures

on earth has this elevation of nature; and his dignity over the other animals is most strikingly shown by this power of studying the heavens. This thought was most beautifully expressed by one of the ancient poets:

"Pronaque cum spectent animalia cætera terram;  
Os homini sublime dedit; cœlumque tueri,  
Jussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus."  
Ovid, Met. Lib. 1, 84—86.

In the Scriptures, God not unfrequently appeals to the starry heavens in proof of his existence and perfections, and as the most sublime exhibition of his greatness and power. See Ps. xix. 1—6. And it may be remarked, that this argument is one that increases in strength, in the view of men, from age to age, just in proportion to the advances which are made in the discoveries of astronomy. It is now far more striking than it was in the times of Isaiah; and, indeed, the discoveries in astronomical science in modern times have given a beauty and power to this argument which could have been but imperfectly understood in the times of the prophets. The argument is one that accumulates from age to age; is one that will be more striking with every new discovery in astronomy; but is one—such is the vastness and beauty of the system of the universe—which can be contemplated in its full power only amidst the more sublime contemplations of eternity. Those who are disposed to contemplate this argument more fully, may

find it presented with great eloquence and beauty in Dr. Chalmers' *Astronomical Discourses*, and in Dick's *Christian Philosopher*. ¶ *Who hath created these things.* These heavens. God is their creator; and therefore God has almighty power. This is the first evidence of the power of God in the contemplation of the heavens, that God is their *Creator*. The other demonstrations referred to are the fact, that he brings out their armies as if they were a marshalled host, and understands and calls all their names. ¶ *That bringeth out their host.* Their *armies*, for so the word *host* means. See Note on ch. i. 9. The word here alludes to the fact that the heavenly bodies seem to be marshalled, or regularly arrayed as an army; that they keep their place, and preserve their order; and are *apparently led on* from the east to the west, like a vast army under a mighty leader.

Canst thou *bring forth* Mazzaroth in his season?

Or canst thou *guide* Arcturus with his sons? Job xxxviii. 32.

¶ *By number.* As if he had numbered, or named them; as a military commander would call forth his armies in their proper order, and have them so arrayed and *numbered* and *enrolled* in the various divisions, that he can command them with ease. ¶ *He calleth them all by names.* This idea is also taken from a military leader, who would know the names of the individuals that composed his army. In smaller divisions of an army, this could of course be done; but the idea is, that God is intimately acquainted with *all* the host of stars; that though their numbers appear to us so great, yet he is acquainted with each one individually, and has that knowledge of it which we have of a person or object which we recognise by a *name*. It is said of Cyrus, that he was acquainted by name with every individual that composed his vast army. Of course, this is not to be taken literally of God, but the expression is designed to denote his boundless knowledge, and in its connexion to denote his great wisdom and power. The practice of giving names to the stars of heaven

was early, and is known to have been originated by the Chaldeans. Intimations of this custom we have not infrequently in the Scriptures, as far back as the time of Job.

Which maketh Arcturus, and Orion, and Pleiades,  
And the chambers of the South. Job ix. 9.

Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades,

Or loose the bands of Orion?

Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season?

Or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Job xxxviii. 31, 32.

This power of giving names to all the stars is beautifully ascribed to God in Ps. cxlvii. 4:

He telleth the number of the stars,  
He calleth them all by their names.

This view of the greatness of God is more striking now than it was in the times of David or Isaiah. Little then, comparatively, was known of the heavens, or the number of the stars. But since the invention of the telescope, the view of the heavenly world has been enlarged almost to immensity; and though the expression "he calleth them all by their names," had great sublimity as used in the time of Isaiah, yet it raises in us far higher conceptions of the power and greatness of God when applied to what we know now of the heavens. And yet, doubtless, our view of the heavens is much farther beneath the sublime reality than were the prevalent views in the time of the prophet beneath those which we now have. As an illustration of this we may remark, that the milky way which stretches across the heavens, is now ascertained to receive its milky appearance from the mingling together of the light of an innumerable number of stars, too remote to be seen by the naked eye. Dr. Herschell examined a portion of the milky way about fifteen degrees long and two broad, and found that it contained no fewer than fifty thousand stars, large enough to be distinctly counted, and he suspected that that portion contained twice as many more which for the want of sufficient light in his telescope, he saw only now and then. It is to be remembered, also, that

27. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, is hid from the LORD, and my  
and speakest, O Israel, My way judgment is passed over from my  
God?

g Ps. 77. 7, &c.

NEW TRANSLATION.

27. Why sayest thou, O Jacob,  
And speakest, O Israel,  
"My way is hidden from JEHOVAH,  
"And by my God my cause is passed by!"

the galaxy, or milky way, which we see with the naked eye, is only one of a large number of nebulae of similar construction, which are arranged, apparently, in *strata*, and which extend to great length in the heavens. According to this, and on every correct supposition in regard to the heavens, the number of the stars surpasses all our powers of computation. Yet God is said to lead them all forth as *marshalled armies*—how beautiful a description when applied to the *nebulae*—and to call all their names! ¶ *By the greatness of his might.* By his own power, unaided by others. It is his single and unassisted arm that conducts them; his own hand alone that sustains them. ¶ *Not one faileth.* Not one is wanting; not one of the immense host is out of its place, or unnoticed. All are arranged in infinite widom; all are in their proper places; all observe the proper order, and the proper times. How strikingly true is this, on the slightest inspection of the heavens. How impressive and grand is it in the higher developments of the discoveries of astronomy!

27. *Why sayest thou, &c.* This verse is designed to reprove the people for their want of confidence in God. The idea is, "If God is so great; if he arranges the hosts of heaven with such unerring skill, causing all the stars to observe their proper place and their exact times, the interests of his people are safe in his hands. He will evince the same fidelity in regard to you. He has abundant power to defend you. The God of heaven can sustain; and if he is faithful to the heavens, if he preserves their order, if his fidelity is shown in their regular and uninterrupted movements from age to age, your interests are safe in his hand." Piety may always

find security in the promises of God, and in the assurance that the God who preserves the unbroken order of the heavens will not fail to keep and save his people. The language in this verse is to be understood as addressed to the Jews sighing for deliverance in their long and painful captivity in Babylon. Their city and temple had been destroyed, and had laid waste for many years; their captivity had been long and wearisome, and doubtless many would be ready to say, that it would never end. To furnish an argument to meet this state of despondency, the prophet sets before them this sublime description of the faithfulness and the power of God. ¶ *O Jacob.* A name often given to the Jews as the descendants of Jacob. ¶ *O Israel.* Denoting the same. The name Israel was given to Jacob because he had power to prevail as a prince with God; and it became the common name by which his descendants were known. ¶ *My way is hid from the LORD.* That is, is not seen, or noticed. The word *may* here denote, evidently, the state, or condition; the manner of life, or the calamities which they experienced. The term *way* is often thus employed to denote the lot, condition, or manner in which one lives, or acts; his experience, or how it goes with him. Jer. xii. 1; Isa. x. 24; Ps. xxxvii. 5. The phrase, "is hid," means that God is ignorant of it, or disregards it; that he does not attend to it; and the complaint here is, that God had not regarded them in their calamities, but had forgotten them, and would not interpose to save them. ¶ *And my judgment.* My cause. The word here refers to their condition among the people where they were captive, and by whom they were oppressed.

28. Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, <sup>z</sup> neither is weary? *there* <sup>a</sup> is no searching of his understanding.

z ch. 59. 1.

a Ps. 147. 5.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

28. Hast thou not known?  
Hast thou not heard?  
JEHOVAH is the everlasting God,  
The Creator of the ends of the earth;  
He fainteth not, nor is he weary,  
His understanding is unsearchable.

They are represented as being deprived of their liberty; and they here complain that God disregarded their cause; that he did not come forth to vindicate them, and deliver them from their oppressions and their trials.

28. *Hast thou not known?* This is the language of the prophet reproving them for their despondency, and for complaining of being forsaken, and assuring them that God was able to deliver them, and that he was faithful to his promises. This argument of the prophet, which continues to the close of the chapter, comprises the main scope of the chapter, which is to induce them to put confidence in God, and to believe that he was able and willing to deliver them. The phrase, "Hast thou not known?" &c., refers to the fact that the Jewish people had had an abundant opportunity of learning, in their history, and from their fathers, the true character of God, and his entire ability to save them. No people had had so much light on this subject, and now that they were in trial, they ought to recal their former knowledge of his character, and remember his former dealings of faithfulness with them and their fathers. It is well for the people of God in times of calamity and trial to recal to their recollection his former dealings with them and his church. That history will furnish abundant sources of consolation, and abundant assurances that their interests are safe in his hands. ¶ *Hast thou not heard.* From the traditions of the fathers; the instruction which you have received from ancient times. A large part of the knowledge

of the Jews was traditionary; and these attributes of God, as a faithful God, had, no doubt, constituted an important part of the knowledge which had thus been communicated to them. ¶ *The everlasting God.* The God who has existed from eternity, unlike the idols of the heathen. If he was from eternity, he would be unchangeable, and his purposes could not fail. ¶ *The Creator of the ends of the earth.* The phrase, "the ends of the earth," means the same as the earth itself. The earth is sometimes spoken of as a vast plain having limits or boundaries, (see ver. 22.) It is probable that this was the prevailing idea among the ancients. Comp. Deut. xxxiii. 17; 1 Sam. ii. 10; Ps. xix. 6; xxii. 27; xlviii. 10; lxxv. 5; lxxvii. 7; xcvi. 3; Isa. xliii. 6; xlv. 22; lii. 10. The argument here is, that he who has formed the earth could not be exhausted or weary in so small a work as that of defending and protecting his people. ¶ *Fainteth not.* Is not fatigued or exhausted. That God who has formed and sustained all things, is not exhausted in his powers, but is able still to defend and guard his people. ¶ *There is no searching.* There is no finding out, or comprehending. It is impossible to investigate so as fully to learn what he is, or what are his designs. ¶ *His understanding.* The God who made all things must be infinitely wise. There is proof of boundless skill in the works of his hands, and it is impossible for finite mind fully and adequately to search out all the proofs of his wisdom and skill. Man can see only a part—a small part, while the vast ocean, the boundless

29. He <sup>b</sup> giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength.

2 Cor. 12. 9.

30. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

# NEW TRANSLATION.

29. He giveth power to the faint;  
To those who have no might he gives abundant strength.

30. Even the youths shall faint and be weary,  
And the young men shall utterly fall.

deep of his wisdom lies still unexplored. This thought is beautifully expressed by Zophar in Job xi. 7—9:

Canst thou by searching find out God?

Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

It is as high as heaven;

What canst thou do?

Deeper than hell:

What canst thou know?

The measure thereof is longer than the earth,  
And broader than the sea.

The argument here is, that that God who has made all things, *must* be intimately acquainted with the wants of his people. He *must* see all their sights, and their sufferings; and must know all that they needed. They had, therefore, no reason to complain that their way was hidden from the Lord, and their cause passed over by him. *Perhaps* also, it is implied, that as his understanding was vast, they ought not to expect to be able to comprehend the reason of all his doings, but should expect that there would be much that was mysterious and unsearchable. The *reasons* of his doings are often hid from his people; and their consolation is to be found in the assurance that he is infinitely wise, and that he who rules over the universe *must* know what is best, and CANNOT ERR.

29. *He giveth power to the faint.* To his weak, and feeble people. To those unable to defend and deliver themselves. To those who are conscious of their weakness, and who look to him for aid. This is one of his attributes; and his people, therefore, should put their trust in him, and look to him for aid. Comp. 2 Cor. xii. 9.—The design of this verse is to give consolation to the weak and afflicted and down-trodden people in Babylon, by recalling to their

minds the truth that it was one of the characteristics of God that he ministered strength to those who were conscious of their own feebleness, and who looked to him for support. It is a truth, however, as applicable to us as to them—a truth inestimably precious to those who feel that they are weak and feeble, and who look to God for aid. Such he never leaves, nor forsakes.

30. *Even the youths shall faint.* The most vigorous young men; those in whom we expect manly strength, and who are best fitted to endure hardy toil. They became weary by labour. Their powers are soon exhausted. The *design* here is, to contrast the most vigorous and manly of the human race with God; and to show that while all their powers fail, the power of God is unexhausted, and inexhaustible. ¶ *And the young men.* The word here used denotes properly those who are chosen, or selected (ἐκλεκτοί, Greek, ἐκλεκτοί), and may be applied to those who were selected or chosen for any hazardous enterprise, or dangerous achievement in war; those who would be selected for vigor, or activity. The meaning is, that the most chosen or elect of the human family—the most vigorous and manly must be exhausted by toil, or worn down by fatigue, or paralysed by sickness or death; but that the powers of God never grew weary; and that those who trust in him should never become faint, and fail. The most vigorous among men, if they trusted to their own powers, and relied on their own efforts, would soon become weary; the feeblest of his people, if they trusted in God would renew their strength, and rise as on eagles' wings.

31. But they <sup>c</sup> that wait upon the LORD shall <sup>1</sup> renew <sup>d</sup> their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, <sup>e</sup> and not be weary; and they shall walk <sup>f</sup> and not faint.

<sup>c</sup> Ps. 84. 7; 92. 1, 13.

<sup>d</sup> Ps. 103. 5.

<sup>1</sup> *change.*

<sup>e</sup> Heb. 12. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Mic. 4. 5

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

31. But they who trust in JEHOVAH shall gather new strength;  
They shall ascend as on the wings of eagles;  
They shall run and not be weary;  
They shall walk and not faint.

31. *But they that wait upon the LORD.* The word rendered "wait upon" here, from *נָחַם*, denotes properly to wait in the sense of expecting. The phrase "to wait on JEHOVAH," means to wait for his help; that is, to trust in him, to put our hope or confidence in him. It is applicable to those who are in circumstances of danger or want, and who see no relief but in him, and who look to him for his merciful interposition. *Here* it properly refers to those who were suffering a long and grievous captivity in Babylon, and who had no prospect of deliverance but in him. They were weak and feeble; oppressed and down-trodden, and there was none but God who could deliver. The phrase is applicable also to *all* who feel that they are weak, feeble, guilty, and helpless, and who in view of this put their trust in JEHOVAH. The promise, or assurance, here is general in its nature, and is as applicable to his people now as it was in the times of the captivity in Babylon. Religion, or the service of God, is often expressed in the Scriptures by "waiting on JEHOVAH," i. e., by looking to him for aid, expecting deliverance through his aid, putting the trust in him. See Ps. xxv. 3, 5, 21; xxvii. 14; xxxvii. 7, 9, 34; lxix. 3. Comp. Note, Isa. viii. 17; xxx. 18. It does not *imply* inactivity, or want of personal exertion; it implies merely that our hope of aid and salvation is in him—a feeling that is *as* consistent with the most strenuous endeavours to secure the object, as it is with a state of inactivity and indolence. Indeed, no man can *wait* on God in a proper manner who does not use the means

which he has appointed for conveying to us his blessing. To *wait* on him without using any means to obtain his aid is to tempt him; to expect miraculous interposition is unauthorized, and must meet with disappointment. And they only wait on him in a proper manner who expect his blessing in the common modes in which he imparts it to men—in the use of those means and efforts which he has appointed, and which he is accustomed to bless. The farmer who should *wait* for God to plough and sow his fields, would not only be disappointed, but would be guilty of provoking God. And so the man who waits for God to do what he ought to do; to save him without using any of the means of grace, or without giving up his heart to him, will not only be disappointed, but will provoke his displeasure. ¶ *Shall renew their strength.* Marg., *change.* The Hebrew word commonly means to *change*, to *alter*; and then to *revive*, to *renew*, to *cause* to flourish again; as e. g., a tree that has decayed and fallen down. See Note, ch. ix. 10. Comp. Job xiv. 7. Here, it is evidently used in the sense of *renewing*, or *causing* to *revive*; to *increase*, and *restore* that which is decayed. It means that the people of God who trust in him shall become strong in faith; able to contend with their spiritual foes, to gain the victory over their sins, and to discharge aright the duties, and to meet aright the trials of life. God gives them strength, if they put their trust in him, and *seek* him in the way of his appointment—a promise which has been verified in the experience of his people in every age

¶ *They shall mount up with wings as eagles.* Lowth translates this,

*They shall put forth fresh feathers like the moulting eagle;*

and in his note on the passage remarks, that "it has been a common and popular opinion that the eagle lives and retains his vigour to a great age; and that beyond the common lot of other birds, he moults in his old age, and renews his feathers, and with them his youth." He supposes that the passage in Ps. ciii. 5, "So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's," refers to this fact. That this was a common and popular opinion among the ancients, there can be no doubt, and is clearly proved by Bochart, Hieroz. P. 2, Lib. ii. c. i. pp. 165—169. The opinion was, that at stated times the eagle plunged itself in the sea and cast off its old feathers, and that new feathers started forth, and that thus the eagle lived often to the hundredth year, and then threw itself in the sea and died. See Bochart. In accordance with this opinion, the LXX render this passage, "They shall put forth fresh feathers, *πτεροφύησουσιν*, like eagles;" and the Vulgate "assument pennas sicut aquilæ." The Chaldee renders it, "They who trust in the Lord shall be gathered from the captivity, and shall increase their strength, and renew their youth as a germ which grows up; upon wings of eagles shall they run, and not be fatigued," &c.—But whatever may be the truth in regard to the eagle, there is no reason to believe that Isaiah here had any reference to the fact that it moults in its old age. The translation of Lowth was derived from the Septuagint, and not from the Hebrew text. The meaning of the Hebrew is simply, "they shall ascend on wings as eagles," or "they shall lift up the wings as eagles;" and the image is derived from the fact that the eagle rises on the most vigorous wing of any bird, and that it ascends apparently farther towards the sun. It rises high, and keeps its vigorous course; and the figure, therefore, denotes strength, elevation, vigor of purpose; strong and manly piety; an elevation above the world;

communion with God, and a nearness to his throne—as the eagle ascends towards the sun. ¶ *They shall run, and not be weary, &c.* This passage, also is but another mode of expressing the same idea—that they who trust in God should be vigorous, elevated, unwearied; that he should sustain and uphold them; and that in his service they should never faint.—This was at first designed to be applied to the Jews in captivity in Babylon, to induce them to put their trust in God. But it is as applicable to Christians as it was to them. It is of a general nature; and is as true now as it was at that time. It has been found in the experience of thousands and tens of thousands, that by waiting on the Lord the heart has been invigorated; the faith has been confirmed, and the affections have been raised above the world. Strength has been given to bear trial without murmuring; to engage in arduous duty without fainting, and to pursue the perilous and toilsome journey of life without exhaustion.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### ANALYSIS.

The design of this chapter is, evidently, the same as that of the preceding, and this is to be regarded as the continuation of the argument commenced there. Its object is to lead those who were addressed, to put confidence in God. In the introduction to ch. xl. it was remarked, that this is to be regarded as addressed to the exile Jews in Babylon near the close of their captivity. Their country, city, and temple had been laid waste. The prophet represents himself as bringing consolation to them in this situation; and particularly by the assurance that their long captivity was about to end; and that they were about to be restored to their own land, and that their mournful captivity was to be succeeded by brighter and happier times. In the previous chapter, there were general reasons given why they should put their confidence in God—arising from the firmness of his promises, the fact that he had created all things, that he had all

## CHAPTER XLI.

1. Keep silence <sup>a</sup> before me, O islands; and let the people renew

<sup>a</sup> Zech. 2. 13.

*their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.*

## NEW TRANSLATION.

1. Be silent before me, ye distant lands;  
And the people, let them gather strength!  
Let them come near; then let them speak:  
Let us enter into debate together!

power, &c. In this chapter, there is a more specific view given, and a clearer light thrown on the mode in which deliverance would be brought to them. The prophet specifies that God would raise up a deliverer, and that that deliverer would be able to subdue, under the direction of God, all their enemies. The dependence of their enemies on their idols would avail them nothing; for it was the purpose of God to effect deliverance for his people. The chapter may be conveniently divided into the following parts:—

I. God calls the distant nations to an inquiry, or a public investigation of his ability to aid his people; to an *argument* whether he was able to deliver his people, and to the statement of the reasons why they should confide in him, ver. 1.

II. He specifies that he will raise up a man from the east—who should be able to overcome the enemies of the Jews, and to effect their deliverance. This, the prophet says, was to be effected by JEHOVAH, vs. 2—4.

III. The consternation of the nations at the approach of Cyrus, and their excited and agitated fleeing to their idols is set forth, vs. 5—7.

IV. God gives to his people the assurance of his protection and friendship, vs. 8—14. This is shown (1) because they were the children of Abraham, his friend, and he was bound in covenant faithfulness to protect them, vs. 8, 9. (2) By direct assurance that he would aid and protect them; that though they were feeble, yet he was strong enough to deliver them, vs. 10—14.

V. He says that he will enable them to overcome and scatter their foes, as

the chaff is driven away on the mountains by the whirlwind, vs. 15, 16.

VI. He gives to his people, who are poor and needy, the special promise of assistance and comfort. He will meet them in their desolate condition, and will give them consolation *as if* fountains were opened in deserts, and trees, producing grateful shade and fruit, were planted in the wilderness, vs. 17—20.

VII. He appeals directly to the enemies of the Jews, to the worshippers of idols. He challenges them to give any evidence of the power or the divinity of their idols. He appeals to the fact that he had foretold future events; that he had raised up a deliverer for his people in proof of *his* divinity, and *his* power to save, vs. 21—29.

The *argument* of the whole is, that no confidence is to be placed in idols; that the idol gods were unable to defend the nations which trusted in them; that God would raise up a mighty prince who should be able to deliver the Jews from their long and painful captivity; and that they, therefore, should put their trust in JEHOVAH.

1. *Keep silence before me.* Comp. Zech. ii. 13. The idea is, that the people who were addressed here—the islands—the heathen nations, were to be silent while God should speak, or be silent with a view of entering into an argument with him respecting the comparative power of God and of idols to defend their respective worshippers. The argument is stated in the following verses, and preparatory to the statement of that argument, the people are exhorted to be silent. This is probably to show a proper awe and reverence for JEHOVAH, before whom the argument



2. Who raised up <sup>1</sup> the righteous | to his foot, gave <sup>c</sup> the nations be-  
man from the east, called <sup>b</sup> him  
<sup>1</sup> righteousness.      <sup>b</sup> ch. 46. 11.      <sup>c</sup> Ezra 1. 2.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

2. Who hath raised up, from the East, the just man,  
And called him to follow his steps,

was to be conducted; and to evince a proper sense of the magnitude and sacredness of the inquiry. Comp. ver.

21. The main idea is, that the nations should evince reverence when they come before יְהוָה; that they should feel that they are in his presence; and that when they are about to speak in his presence, to argue, or plead with him, their minds should be calm; they should be still, and think of God; they should bring themselves into a suitable frame to enter into an argument with the High and Holy One. And it may be remarked here, that the same reasons will apply to all approaches which are made to God. When we are about to come before him in prayer, or praise; to confess our sins and to plead for pardon, or for the salvation of the world; when we engage in argument respecting his being, plans, or perfections; or when we draw near to him in the closet, the family, or the sanctuary, the mind should be filled with awe and reverence. It is well, it is proper, to pause and reflect, and think of what our emotions should be, and of what we should say before God. Comp. Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

¶ *O islands.* (עִי) This word properly means *islands*, and is so translated here by the Vulg., the LXX, the Chaldee, the Syriac, and the Arabic. But the word also is used to denote maritime countries; countries that were situated on sea-coasts, or the regions beyond sea. See Note, ch. xx. 6. The word is applied, therefore, to the islands of the Mediterranean; to the maritime coasts; and then, also, it comes to be used in the sense of *any* distant lands; any lands or coasts far remote, or beyond sea. See Jer. xxv. 22; Isa. xxiv. 15; Note, xl. 15; xlii. 4, 10, 12; xlix. 1; xli. 5; Ps. lxxii. 10; Dan. xi. 18. Here it is evidently used in the sense of distant

nations or lands; the people who were far from Palestine, and who were the worshippers of idols. The argument is represented as being *with* them, and they are invited to prepare their minds by suitable reverence for God, for a contemplation of the argument which was to be presented. ¶ *And let the people.* This evidently denotes the people, or the inhabitants of the "islands;" those who dwelt in the remote lands referred to by the word "islands," the heathen world, those with whom the argument about the power of God was to be conducted. ¶ *Renew their strength.* On the word "renew," see Note, ch. xl. 31. Here it means, "Let them make themselves strong; let them prepare the argument; let them be ready to urge as strong reasons as possible; let them fit themselves to enter into the controversy about the power and glory of יְהוָה." See ver. 21. ¶ *Let them come near.* When they have made all suitable preparation, and are ready to defend their cause. ¶ *Let us come near together to judgment.* The word "judgment" here means, evidently, controversy, argumentation, debate. Thus it is used in Job ix. 32. The language is that which is used of two parties who come together to try a cause, to argue a question, or to engage in debate; and the sense is, that God proposes to enter into an argumentation with the entire heathen world in regard to his power and ability to save his people; that is, he proposes to show the *reasons* why they should trust in him, rather than dread those under whose power they then were, and by whom they had been oppressed. Lowth renders it, correctly expressing the sense, "Let us enter into solemn debate together."

2. Who raised up. Who has excited, (הָעִיר, *hē'ir*), awakened, aroused. The

fore him, and made *him* rule over | to his sword, *and* as driven stub-  
kings? he gave *them* as the dust | ble to his bow.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

And subdued nations before him,  
And given him dominion over kings?  
Who gave them like dust to his sword,  
And like driven stubble to his bow?

word is usually applied to the act of arousing one from sleep, Zech. iv. 1; Cant. ii. 7; iii. 5; viii. 4; then to awake, or arouse, to stir up to any enterprise. Here it means, that God had caused the man here referred to, to awake for the overthrow of their enemies; it was by his agency that he had been qualified for this undertaking, and been led to form the plans which should result in their deliverance. This is the *first* argument, or consideration, which God urges to induce his people to put confidence in him, and to hope for deliverance; and the fact that He had raised up and qualified such a man for the work, he urges as a proof that he would certainly protect and guard his people. ¶ *The righteous man.* Heb., Righteousness. (פָּרָשׁ, *tzēdhēq.*) The LXX render it literally, δικαιοσύνην, *righteousness*. The Vulgate renders it, "the just;" the Syriac as the LXX. The word here evidently means, as in our translation, the just or righteous man. It is common in the Hebrew, as in other languages, to put the abstract for the concrete. ¶ *From the east.* The east of Palestine—the name *east* being given to all the countries that were situated east of that land. In regard to the *person* here referred to, there have been three principal opinions, which it may be proper briefly to notice. (1.) The first is, that which refers it to Abraham. This is the interpretation of the Chaldee Paraphrase, which renders it, "Who has publicly led from the east Abraham, the chosen of the just;" and this interpretation has been adopted by Jarchi, Kimchi, Abarbanel, and by the Jewish writers generally. They say that it means that God had called Abraham from the east; that he conducted him

to the land of Canaan, and enabled him to vanquish the people who resided there, and particularly that he vanquished the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, and delivered Lot from their hands, Gen. xiv.; and that this is designed by God to show them that he who had thus raised up Abraham would raise up *them* also in the east, and would defend them. There are, however, objections to this interpretation which seem to be insuperable, a few of which may be referred to. (a.) The country from which Abraham came, the land of Chaldea or Mesopotamia, is not commonly in the Scriptures called "the east," but the *north*. See Jer. i. 13, 14, 15; iv. 6; vi. 1; xxiii. 8; xxxi. 8; xxv. 9, 26; xlv. 10; l. 3; Dan. xi. 6, 8, 11. This country was situated to the north-east of Palestine, and it is believed is no where in the Scriptures called the country of the east. (b.) The description which is here given of what was accomplished by him who was raised up from the east, is not one that applies to Abraham. It supposes more important achievements than any that signalized the father of the faithful. There were no acts in the life of Abraham that can be regarded as subduing the "nations" before him; as ruling over "kings;" or as scattering them like the dust, or the stubble. It was not a characteristic of Abraham that he was a warrior, or that he spread desolation around him. Indeed, he appears to have been engaged but in one military adventure—the rescue of Lot—and that was of so slight and unimportant a character as not to form the peculiarity of his public life. Had Abraham been referred to here, it would have been for some other trait than that of a con-

queror, or military chieftain. (c.) We shall see that the description and the connexion require us to understand it of another — of Cyrus. (2.) A second opinion is, that it refers directly and entirely to the Messiah. Many of the fathers, as Jerome, Cyril, Eusebius, Theodoret, Procopius, held this opinion. But the objections to this are obvious and insuperable. (a.) It is not true that the Messiah was raised up from the east. He was born in the land of Judea, and always lived in that land. (b.) The description here is by no means one that applies to him. It is the description of a warrior and a conqueror; of one who subdued nations and scattered them before him. (c.) The connexion and design of the passage does not admit of the interpretation. That design is, to lead the Jews in exile to put confidence in God, and to hope for a speedy rescue. In order to this, the prophet directs them to the fact that a king appeared in the east; that he carried desolation before him; that he scattered the nations; and *from these facts* they were to infer that they would themselves be delivered, and that God would be their protector. But how would this design be accomplished by a reference to so remote an event as the coming of the Messiah? (3.) The third opinion therefore remains, that this refers to Cyrus, the Persian monarch by whom Babylon was taken, and by whom the Jews were restored to their own land. In support of this interpretation, a few considerations may be adverted to. (a.) It agrees with the fact in regard to the country from which Cyrus came for purposes of conquest. He came from the land which is everywhere in the Scriptures called the East. (b.) It agrees with the specifications which Isaiah elsewhere makes, where Cyrus is mentioned by name, and where there can be no danger of error in regard to the interpretation. See ch. xlv. 28; xlv. 1—4, 13. Thus in ch. xlv. 11, it is said of Cyrus, "calling a ravenous bird *from the east*, the man that executeth my commandments from a far country." (c.) The entire description here is one that applies in a remarkable manner to Cyrus,

as will be shown more fully in the Notes on the particular expressions which occur. (d.) This supposition accords with the design of the prophet. It was to be an assurance to them, not only that God *would* raise up such a man, but that they should be delivered; and as this was intended to comfort them in Babylon, it was intended that *when* they were apprised of the conquests of Cyrus, they were to be *assured* of the fact that God was their protector; and those conquests, therefore, were to be regarded by them as a sign, or proof, that God would deliver them. This opinion is held by Vitringa, Rosenmüller, and probably by a large majority of the most intelligent commentators. The only objection of weight to it is that suggested by Lowth, that the character of "a righteous man" does not apply to Cyrus. But to this it may be replied, that the word may be used, not in the sense of *pious*, or of a true worshipper of God, but to denote one who was disposed to do justly, who was not a tyrant; and especially it may be applied to him on account of his righteousness, or justice, in delivering the Jews from their hard and oppressive bondage in Babylon, and restoring them to their own land. That was an act of eminent public justice; and the favors which he showed them in protecting them, in enabling them to rebuild their city and temple, were such as to render it not improper that this appellation should be given to him. It may be added, also, that Cyrus was a prince eminently distinguished for justice and equity, and for a mild and kind administration over his own subjects. Xenophon has described his character at length, and proposed him as an example of a just monarch, and his government as an example of an equitable administration. All the ancient writers celebrate his humanity and benevolence. Comp. Diod., lib. xiii. p. 342, and the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon everywhere. Though he was distinguished as a conqueror, yet he was mild in his administration, and though he subdued many nations, yet he was not chargeable with cruelty or oppression. As there will be frequent oc-

easion to refer to Cyrus in the Notes on the chapters which follow, it may be proper here to present a very brief outline of his public actions, that his agency in the deliverance of the Jews may be more fully appreciated. Cyrus was the son of Cambyzes, the Persian, and of Mandane, the daughter of Astyages, king of the Medes. Astyages is in Scripture called Ahasuerus. Cambyzes was, according to Xenophon, (*Cyropædia*, b. 1,) king of Persia, or, according to Herodotus, he was a nobleman. Herod. b. 1, c. 107. If he was the king of Persia, of course Cyrus was the heir of the throne. Cyrus was born in his father's court, A.M. 3405, or B.C. 595, and was educated with great care. At the age of twelve years, his grandfather, Astyages, sent for him and his mother Mandane to court, and he was treated, of course, with great care and attention. Astyages, or Ahasuerus, had a son by the name of Cyaxares, who was born about a year before Cyrus, and who was heir to the throne of Media. Some time after this, the son of the king of Assyria having invaded Media, Astyages, with his son Cyaxares, and his grandson Cyrus marched against him. Cyrus defeated the Assyrians, but was soon after recalled by his father Cambyzes to Persia, that he might be near him. At the age of sixteen, indeed, and when at the court of his grandfather, Cyrus signalized himself for his valor in a war with the king of Babylon. Evil-Merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had invaded the territories of Media, but was repelled with great loss, and Cyrus pursued him with great slaughter to his own borders. This invasion of Evil-Merodach laid the foundation of the hostility between Babylon and Media, which was not terminated until Babylon was taken and destroyed by the united armies of Media and Persia. When Astyages died, after a reign of thirty-five years, he was succeeded by his son Cyaxares, the uncle of Cyrus. He was still involved in a war with the Babylonians. Cyrus was made general of the Persian troops, and at the head of an army of 30,000 men was sent to assist Cyaxares, whom the

Babylonians were preparing to attack. The Babylonian monarch at this time was Neriglissar, who had murdered Evil-Merodach, and who had usurped the crown of Babylon. Cyaxares and Cyrus carried on the war against Babylon during the reigns of Neriglissar and his son Laborosoarchod, and of Nabonadius. The Babylonians were defeated, and Cyrus carried his arms into the countries to the west beyond the river Halys—a river running north into the Euxine Sea, and subdued Cappadocia, and conquered Cræsus, the rich king of Lydia, and subdued almost all Asia Minor. Having conquered this country, he returned again, re-crossed the Euphrates, turned his arms against the Assyrians, and subdued them, and then laid siege to Babylon, and took it, (see Notes on ch. xiii., xiv.,) and subdued that mighty kingdom. During the life of Cyaxares, his uncle, he acted in conjunction with him. On the death of this king of Media, Cyrus married his daughter, and thus united the crowns of Media and Persia. After this marriage, he subdued all the nations between Syria and the Red Sea, and died at the age of seventy, after a reign of thirty years. Cyaxares, the uncle of Cyrus, is in the Scripture called Darius the Mede, (*Dan. v. 31,*) and it is said there, that it was by him that Babylon was taken. But Babylon was taken by the valor of Cyrus, though acting in connexion with, and under Cyaxares; and it said to have been taken by Cyaxares, or Darius, though it was done by the personal valor of Cyrus. Josephus says that Darius with his ally, Cyrus, destroyed the kingdom of Babylon. *Ant. b. xii. c. 13.* Jerome assigns three reasons why Babylon is said in the Scriptures to have been taken by Darius, or Cyaxares; first, because he was the elder of the two; secondly, because the Medes were at that time more famous than the Persians; and thirdly, because the uncle ought to be preferred to the nephew. The Greek writers say that Babylon was taken by Cyrus, without mentioning Cyaxares or Darius, doubtless because it was done solely by his valor. For a full account

3. He pursued them, *and* passed | had not gone with his feet.  
 1 safely; *even* by the way *that* he | <sup>1</sup> in peace.

## TRANSLATION.

3. He pursued them, and passed in safety,  
 By a path which his foot had never trodden.

of the reign of Cyrus, see Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, Herodotus, and the ancient part of the *Universal History*, vol. iv. Ed. Lond. 1779, 8vo. ¶ *Called him to his foot.* Lowth renders this, "Hath called him to attend his steps." Noyes renders it, "Him whom victory meeteth in his march." Grotius, "Called him that he should follow him," and he refers to Gen. xii. 1; Josh. xxiv. 3; Heb. xi. 8. Rosenmüller renders it, "Who hath called from the east that man to whom righteousness occurs at his feet," i. e., attends him. But the idea seems to be, that God had called him to follow him as a leader; he had directed him, he had influenced him to follow him as one follows a guide at his feet, or close to him. ¶ *Gave the nations before him.* That is, subdued nations before him. This is justly descriptive of the victorious career of Cyrus. Among the nations whom he subdued, were the Armenians, the Cappadocians, the Lydians, the Phrygians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, comprising a very large portion of the world known at that time. Cyrus subdued, according to Xenophon, all the nations lying between the Euxine and Caspian seas on the north, to the Red Sea on the south, and even Egypt, so that his own proclamation was true: "JEHOVAH, God of heaven, hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth." ¶ *And made him rule over kings?* As the kings of Babylon, of Lydia, of Cappadocia, &c., who were brought into subjection under him, and acknowledged their dependence on him. ¶ *He gave them as the dust to his sword.* He has scattered, or destroyed them by his sword, as the dust is driven before the wind. A similar expression is used by David:

Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind,  
 I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets. Ps. xviii. 42.

¶ *And as driven stubble.* Stubble that is driven by the wind. The allusion is to the process of fanning, or cleaning grain. The grain was thrown by a shovel or fan in the air, and was thus winnowed, and the stubble or chaff was driven away. So it is said of the nations before Cyrus, implying that they were utterly scattered, that they had no power to resist him, and that they were entirely destroyed. ¶ *To his bow.* The bow was one of the common weapons of war; and the inhabitants of the east were distinguished for its use. The idea in this verse is very beautiful, and is one that is often employed in the sacred Scriptures, and by Isaiah himself. See Job xxi. 18; Ps. i. 4; xxxv. 5; Note, xvii. 13; xxix. 5. Comp. Hos. xiii. 3.

3. *He pursued them.* When they were driven away. He followed on, and devoted them to discomfiture and ruin. ¶ *And passed safely.* Marg., as in the Hebrew, "in peace." That is, he followed them uninjured; i. e., they had no power to rally; he was not led into ambush, and he was safe as far as he chose to pursue them. ¶ *Even by the way that he had not gone with his feet.* By a way that he had not been accustomed to march; in an unusual journey; in a land of strangers. Cyrus had passed his early years on the east of the Euphrates. In his conquests he crossed that river, and extended his march beyond even the river Halys to the western extremity of Asia, and even to Egypt and the Red Sea. The idea here is, that he had not travelled in

4. Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first,<sup>d</sup> and with the last; I *am* he.
5. The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came.

d Rev. i. 17; 22. 13.

NEW TRANSLATION.

4. Who hath performed and done *these things*,  
Calling the generation from the beginning?  
I JEHOVAH, the first,  
And with the last I am the same.
5. The distant nations saw, and were afraid;  
The ends of the earth were astonished;  
They drew near; they came together.

these regions until he did it for purposes of conquest; an idea which is strictly in accordance with the truth of history.

4. *Who hath wrought and done it.* By whom has all this been accomplished? Has it been by the arm of Cyrus? Has it been by human skill and power? The design of this question is obvious. It is to direct attention to the fact that all this has been done by God, and that he who had raised up such a man, and had accomplished all this by means of him, had power to deliver his people. ¶ *Calling the generations from the beginning?* The idea here seems to be, that all the nations that dwell on the earth in every place owed their origin to God. He had founded them—he had directed them—he had ordered the circumstances of their being. Comp. Acts xvii. 26. The word "calling" here seems to be used in the sense of commanding, directing, or ordering them; and the truth taught is, that all the nations were under his control, and had been from the beginning. It was not only true of Cyrus, and his armies, and of those who were subdued before him, but it was true of all the nations and generations. The object seems to be to lift up the thoughts from the conquests of Cyrus to God's universal dominion over all the nations from the beginning of the world. ¶ *I the LORD. I JEHOVAH.* That is, I have done this. It is by my counsel, power, and providential direc-

tion that it has all been done. ¶ *The first.* Before any creature was made; existing before any other being. It implies that he had always existed. The description that God here gives of himself as "the first and the last," is one that is often applied to him in the Scriptures, and is one that properly expresses eternity. See ch. xlv. 6; xlviii. 12. It is remarkable, also, that this expression, which so obviously implies proper eternity, is applied to the Lord Jesus in Rev. i. 17, and xxii. 13. ¶ *And with the last.* The usual form in which this is expressed is simply "the last," ch. xlv. 6; xlviii. 12. The idea here seems to be, "and with the last, I am the same;" i. e., I am unchanging and eternal. None will subsist *after* me; since *with* the last of men, and all created objects I shall be the same that I was in the beginning. Nothing would survive God; or in other words, he would exist for ever and ever. The argument here is, that to this unchanging and eternal God who had thus raised up and directed Cyrus, and subdued the nations before him, and who had control over *all* nations, they might commit themselves, with unwavering confidence, and be assured that he was able to protect and deliver them.

5. *The isles saw it.* The distant nations. Note, ver. 1. They saw what was done in the conquests of the man whom God in this remarkable manner had raised up. They were witnesses of what God had done by his instrumen-

6. They helped every one his neighbour; and *every one* said to his brother, Be <sup>1</sup> of good courage.

7. So <sup>c</sup> the carpenter encouraged the <sup>1</sup> goldsmith, and he that smooth-

eth *with* the hammer <sup>2</sup> him that smote the anvil, <sup>3</sup> saying, It is ready for the sodering: and he fastened it with nails, *that* it should not be moved.

<sup>1</sup> Strong.  
e ch. 40. 19. <sup>1</sup> or, the founder.

<sup>2</sup> or, the smiting.  
<sup>3</sup> or, saying of the soder, It is good.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

6. Every man assisted his neighbor,  
And to his brother he said, "Be of good courage."

7. And the carver encouraged the smith,  
He that smootheth with the hammer him that smote on the anvil,

tality; and they had had demonstration, therefore, of the mighty power of JEHOVAH above the power of idols. ¶ *And feared.* Were alarmed and trembled. All were apprehensive that *they* would be subdued, and driven away as with the tempest. ¶ *The ends of the earth.* Distant nations, occupying the extremities of the globe. See Note, ch. xl. 28. ¶ *Drew near, and came.* Came together for the purpose of mutual alliance and self-defence. The prophet evidently refers to what he says in the following verses, that they formed treaties; endeavored to prepare for self-defence; looked to their idol gods, and encouraged each other in their attempts to offer a successful resistance to the victorious arms of Cyrus.

6. *They helped every one his neighbour.* The worshippers of idols; the idolatrous nations. The idea is, that they formed confederations to strengthen each other, and to oppose him whom God had raised up to subdue them. They felt that it was a common cause, and they entered into a mutual alliance of offence and defence. The prophet describes a state of general consternation existing among them, when they felt that all was in danger, and when they supposed that their security consisted only in confederation, and in increased attention to their religion, in repairing their idols and making new ones, and thus, if possible, in conciliating the favor and securing the aid of their gods. It was natural for them to suppose that the calamities which were

coming upon them by the invasion of Cyrus were the judgments of their gods, for some neglect, or some prevailing crimes, and that their favor could be secured only by a more diligent attention to their service, and by forming new images and establishing them in the proper places of worship. The prophet, therefore, describes in a graphic manner the consternation, the alarm, and the haste everywhere apparent among them in attempting to conciliate the favor of their idols, and to encourage each other. Nothing is more natural, or more common, than for men, when they are in danger, to give great attention to religion, though they may greatly neglect or despise it when they are in safety. Men fly to temples and churches and altars in the times of plague and the pestilence; and as regularly flee *from* them when the calamity is overpast. ¶ *Be of good courage.* Marg., as in the Heb. "Be strong." The sense is, do not faint or be alarmed at the invasion of Cyrus. Unite to resist his arms, and seek again the favor of the gods. Make new images, set them up in the temples, show unusual zeal in religion, and the favor of the gods may be secured, and the dangers be averted. This is to be understood as the language of the idolatrous nations, among whom Cyrus, under the direction of JEHOVAH, was carrying his conquests and spreading desolation.

7. *So the carpenter.* Note, ch. xl. 19. ¶ *Encouraged the goldsmith.* Marg.,

8. But thou, Israel, *art* my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen,<sup>f</sup> | the seed of Abraham my <sup>s</sup> friend.

*f* Pa. 135. 4.

*g* 2 Ch. 20. 7. James 2. 23.

NEW TRANSLATION.

Saying "It is ready for the soldering;"

And he fastened it with nails that it should not be moved.

8. But thou, Israel, my servant;  
Jacob, whom I have chosen;  
Seed of Abraham my friend;

*The founder.* See Note, ch. xl. 19. The word properly means one who melts, or smelts metals of any kind; and may be applied either to one who works in gold, silver, or brass. The image here is that of haste, anxiety, solicitude. One workman in the manufacture of idols encouraged another, in order that the idols might be finished as soon as possible, and that thus the favor of the gods might be propitiated, and the impending danger averted. ¶ *He that smootheth with the hammer.* That is, he encourages or strengthens him that smites on the anvil. The idol was commonly cast or founded, and of course was in a rough state. This required to be *smoothed*, or polished, and this was in part done, doubtless, by a small hammer. ¶ *Him that smote the anvil.* The workman whose office it was to work on the anvil—forming parts of the idol, or perhaps, chains. ¶ *It is ready for the soldering.* The parts are ready to be welded, or soldered together. All this is descriptive of haste and anxiety to have the work done; and the object of the prophet is evidently to ridicule this vain solicitude to defend themselves against the plans and purposes of God by efforts of this kind. ¶ *And he fastened it with nails.* The workman fastened the idol with nails. He fixed it to its place in the temple, or in the dwelling; and thus showed a purpose that the worship of the idol should be permanent, and fixed. Hooks or nails were necessary to keep it in its place, and secure it from falling down. When the idol was thus fixed, they supposed that their kingdoms were safe. They judged that the gods would interpose to protect and defend them

from their foes.—This is a beautiful description of the anxiety, and pains, and consternation of sinners when calamity is coming upon them; and of the nature of their reliances. What could these dumb idols—these masses of brass or silver, or stone, do to protect them? And in like manner what can all the refuges of sinners do when God comes to judge them, and when the calamities connected with death and the judgment shall overtake them? They are just as full of consternation as were the heathen who are here described; and all their refuges will be just as little to be relied on as were the senseless images which the heathen had made for their defence.

8. *But thou, Israel, art my servant.* This is an address directly to the Jews, and is designed to show them, in view of the truths which had just been urged, that God was their protector and friend. Those who relied on idols were trusting to that which could not aid them. But those who trusted in him were safe. For their protection he had raised up Cyrus; for this purpose he had subdued the nations before him. And God now expresses to them the assurance that though the nations should be destroyed, yet that he had chosen them, and would remember them, and his promise made to Abraham, their illustrious ancestor.—The word "servant" here is used in a mild and gentle sense, not to denote bondage or slavery, but to denote that they had been engaged in his service; and that he regarded them as subject to his laws, and as under his protection. ¶ *Jacob whom I have chosen.* The descendants of Jacob whom I have selected to be my



9. *Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.*

10. *Fear<sup>n</sup> thou not; for I am with<sup>i</sup> thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen<sup>k</sup> thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

† De. 31. 6, 8.  
A vs. 13, 14. ch. 48. 5. k ch. 40. 29.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

9. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth,  
And have called thee from the extremities thereof,  
And said unto thee, "Thou art my servant,  
"I have chosen thee, and will not reject thee;"

10. Fear not, for I am with thee;  
Be not dismayed, for I am thy God.

people. ¶ *The seed.* The descendants, the posterity of Abraham. ¶ *My friend.* Heb., "Loving me," my lover. Abraham was regarded as the friend of God. See 2 Chron. xx. 7; James ii. 23. "And he was called the friend of God." This most honourable appellation Abraham deserved by a life of devoted piety, and by habitually submitting himself to the will of God.—The idea in this verse is, that as they were the descendants of *his friend*, God deemed himself bound to protect and deliver them according to his gracious promises; and this is one of the many instances where the divine favour is manifested to descendants in virtue of the piety and prayers of their ancestors.

9. *Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth.* From Chaldea—regarded by the Jews as the remote part of the earth. Thus in ch. xiii. 5, it is said of the Medes that they came "from a far country, from the end of heaven." See Note on that place. Abraham was called from Ur of the Chaldees—a city still remaining on the east of the river Euphrates. It is probably the same place as the Persian fortress *Ur*, between Nesibis and the Tigris. It was visited by Mr. Wolfe, Mr. Buckingham, and by others. ¶ *And called thee from the chief men thereof.* Or rather, from the *extremities* of the earth. The word *ἄκρῃ*, means, properly, *a side*; and when applied to the earth, means the sides, ends, or extremities of it. In Ex. xxiv.

11, it is rendered "nobles," from an Arabic word signifying to be deep-rooted, and hence those who are sprung from an ancient stock. *Gesenius*. In this place it is evidently used in the same sense as the word (*ἄκρῃ*), meaning side, in the sense of extremity, or end. The parallelism requires us to give this interpretation to the word. So Jerome renders it, *à longinquis ejus* (sc. *terræ*.) The LXX render it, *ἐκ τῶν ὀκτωπύλων*, "from the speculations, of the earth" (*Thompson*); or rather, perhaps, meaning from the extremity of *vision*; from the countries lying in the distant horizon; or from the elevated places, those which offered an extensive range of vision. The Chaldee renders it, "from the kingdoms I have selected thee." Symmachus renders it, *ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγκύωνων αὐτῆς*—from its angles, its corners, its extremities. Some have supposed that this refers to the deliverance from Egypt, but the more probable interpretation is that which refers it to the call of Abraham from Chaldea; and the idea is, that as God had called him from that distant land, and had made him his friend, he would preserve and guard his posterity. *Perhaps* it may be implied that he would be favorable to them in that same land from whence he had called their illustrious progenitor, and would, in like manner, conduct them to the land of promise—i. e., to their own land.

10. *Fear thou not.* Be not afraid of

11. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed<sup>1</sup> and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they<sup>1</sup> that strive with thee shall perish.

<sup>1</sup> ch. 45. 24. Zech. 12. 3.  
<sup>1</sup> the men of thy strife.

12. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even<sup>2</sup> them that contended with thee: <sup>3</sup> they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

<sup>2</sup> the men of thy contention.  
<sup>3</sup> the men of thy war.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

I will strengthen thee,

Yea, I will aid thee,

Yea, I will sustain thee with my faithful right hand.

11. Behold, all they that were enraged against thee shall be ashamed and confounded;

They that contended with thee shall become as nothing and shall perish.

12. Thou shalt seek, and shalt not find the men that strove with thee.

They who make war with thee shall be as nothing, and shall utterly perish.

all the enemies which rise up against thee. This verse is plain in its meaning, and it is exceedingly beautiful, and full of consolation. It is to be regarded as addressed primarily to the exile Jews during their long and painful captivity in Babylon; and the idea is, that they who had been selected by God to be his peculiar people would be safe, and that he would be their constant protector. But the promise is one that may be regarded as addressed to all his people in similar circumstances, and it is as true now as it was then, that those whom God has chosen, and who are his people, have nothing to fear. ¶ *For I am with thee.* This is a reason why they should not be afraid. God was their protector, and would be with them, and of whom should they be afraid? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" What higher consolation can man desire than the assurance that God is with him to protect him? The idea here is, that God would never leave them, and that, therefore, all their interests would be safe in his hand. ¶ *Be not dismayed.* The word used here and rendered *dismayed* (שָׁחָה, *tschāh*), is derived from (שָׁחָה, *shāhāh*), to see, to look; and then to look about as one does in a state of alarm, or danger. The sense here is,

that they should be calm, and under no apprehension from their foes. ¶ *For I am thy God.* I am able to preserve and strengthen thee. The God of heaven was their God; and as he had all power, and that power was pledged for their protection, they had nothing to fear. ¶ *I will uphold thee.* I will sustain thee. I will enable you to bear all your trials. ¶ *With the right hand of my righteousness.* With my faithful right hand. The phrase is a Hebrew mode of expression, meaning that God's hand was faithful, or just; that it might be relied on, and would secure them. It may be implied also that his dealings with them were righteous, or just, and that his justice was pledged to guard and defend them.

11. *All they that were incensed against thee.* They who were enraged against thee—i. e., the Chaldeans, who made war upon you, and reduced you to bondage. ¶ *Shall be ashamed and confounded.* They shall lose their power and splendor; their name and greatness shall come to an end. To be ashamed and confounded is often used as synonymous with being overcome and destroyed. ¶ *They that strive with thee.* Marg., as in the Hebrew, "the men of thy strife." The expression refers to their enemies, the Babylonians.

12. *Thou shalt seek them, &c.* This

13. For I the LORD thy God  
will hold thy <sup>m</sup> right hand, saying  
unto thee, Fear not; I will help  
thee.

*m* De. 33. 26, 29.

14. Fear not, thou worm Jacob,  
and ye men <sup>1</sup> of Israel; I will help  
thee, saith the LORD, and thy Re-  
deemer, the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>1</sup> or, few men.

NEW TRANSLATION.

13. For I am JEHOVAH thy God, holding thee by the right hand,  
And saying unto thee, "Fear not, I will help thee."  
14. Fear not, thou worm Jacob,  
And ye mortals of Israel;  
I will help thee, saith JEHOVAH,  
And thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

denotes that they should be utterly destroyed. It would be impossible to find them. They should cease to exist. The whole verse, with the verse following, is emphatic, repeating in varied terms what was said before, and meaning that their foes should be entirely destroyed.

13. *Fear not.* Note, ver. 10. ¶ *Thou worm.* This word is properly applied as it is with us, to denote a worm, such as is generated in putrid substances, Ex. xvi. 20; Isa. xiv. 11; lxvi. 24; or such as destroy plants, Jonah iv. 7; Deut. xxviii. 39. It is used also to describe a person that is feeble and despised; one that is poor, afflicted, and an object of insignificance.

Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not;  
Yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.  
How much less man, that is a worm;  
And the son of man which is a worm?

Job xxv. 5, 6.

But I am a worm, and no man,  
A reproach of men, and despised of the people.

Ps. xxii. 6.

In the passage before us, it is applied to the Jews in Babylon as poor, oppressed, afflicted, and as objects of insignificance, and of contempt in view of their enemies. It denotes that in comparison with God they were weak and feeble, and in themselves unworthy of notice. It implies that in themselves they were unable to defend or deliver themselves, and in this state of helplessness, and while they were conscious of this, God offers to aid them, and assures them that they have nothing to fear. ¶ *Jacob.* The Jews, regarded as the descendants of Jacob.

¶ *And ye men of Israel.* Marg., "few men." מְעַט יִשְׂרָאֵל, *methē-Isrā'el*. There has been a great variety in the explanation of this phrase. Aquila renders it τεθνεώτες, and Theodotian, νεκροί, *dead*. So the Vulgate, qui mortui estis ex Israel. The LXX render it, "Fear not, Jacob, ὀλιγιστὸς Ἰσραὴλ, O diminutive Israel." The Chaldee, "Fear not, O tribe of the house of Jacob, ye seeds of Israel," &c. Lowth renders it, "ye mortals of Israel." The Hebrew denotes, properly, as in our translation, "men of Israel;" but there is evidently included the idea of fewness or feebleness among the Jews. The parallelism requires us so to understand it; and the word men, or mortal men, may well express the idea of feebleness. ¶ *I will help thee.* I will assist you in your conscious feebleness, and will deliver you. ¶ *Saith the LORD.* Saith JEHOVAH. ¶ *And thy Redeemer.* On the meaning of this word, see Note on ch. xxxv. 9, and ch. xliii. 1, 3. It is applied here to the rescue from the captivity of Babylon, and is used in the general sense of deliverer. God would deliver, or rescue them as he had done in times past. It was his character, and his appropriate title, that he *delivered* or *redeemed* his people. He had done it so often, and had so pledged himself to do it, that this might be regarded as his *appropriate appellation*, that he was THE REDEEMER of his people. ¶ *The Holy One of Israel.* The Holy Being whom the Israelites adored, and who was their protector and their friend. See Note, ch. ii. 4.

15. Behold, I will make thee a the <sup>a</sup> mountains, and beat *them*  
new sharp threshing instrument small, and shalt make the hills as  
having <sup>1</sup> teeth: thou shalt thresh chaff

<sup>1</sup> mouths.

• Mi 4. 13.

NEW TRANSLATION.

15. Behold I will constitute thee a threshing-wain, sharp, new  
With pointed teeth;  
Thou shalt thresh the mountains and beat them small,  
And the hills thou shalt make like chaff.

This appellation is often given to God. See ch. v. 19, 24, x 20; xii. 6; xvii. 7, xxix. 19, xxx. 11, 12. We may remark in view of these verses, (1.) That the people of God are in themselves feeble, and defenceless. They have no strength on which they can rely. They are often so conscious of their feebleness, and so encompassed with difficulties which they feel they have no strength to overcome, that they are disposed to apply to themselves the appellation of "worm," and by others they are looked on as objects of contempt, and are despised. (2.) They have nothing to fear. Though they are feeble, God, their God and Redeemer, is strong. He is *their* Redeemer, and their friend, and they may put their trust in him. Their enemies cannot ultimately triumph over them, but they will be scattered, and become as nothing. (3.) In times of trial, want, and persecution, the friends of God should put their trust alone in him. When human help fails, and when they feel their utter feebleness, they should come and repose their all on his arms. It is often the plan of God so to afflict and humble his people, and so to show them their weakness, as to induce them to put their entire confidence in him; so that they shall feel their utter helplessness and dependence, and be led to him as the only source of aid and strength.

15. *Behold, I will make thee, &c.* The object of the illustration in this verse and the following is, to show that their enemies should be destroyed before them; that God would clothe them with power, and that all difficulties in their way would vanish. Everything that opposed and resisted their return

to their own land should be removed, as if lofty mountains were levelled, and scattered like chaff before the wind. To express this idea, the prophet uses an image derived from the mode of threshing in the East, where the heavy wain or sledge was made to pass over a large pile of sheaves, and to crush them and bruise out the grain, and separate the chaff so that the wind would drive it away. The phrase, "I will make thee," means, "I will constitute, or appoint thee,"—i.e., thou shalt be such a threshing instrument. It is not that God would make such a sledge or wain for them, but that they should be such themselves, they should beat and remove the obstacles in the way as the threshing wain crushed the pile of grain. ¶ *A new sharp threshing instrument.* A threshing-wain, or a corn-drag. For a description of this, comp. the Notes on ch. xxviii. 27, 28. ¶ *Having teeth.* Or having edges, or with double edges. The Hebrew word is applied to a sword, and means a two-edged sword. Ps. cxlix. 6. The word here means having many edges, teeth, or points. It was serrated, or so made as to cut up the straw and separate the grain from the chaff. The following descriptions, from Lowth and Niebuhr, may serve still further to illustrate the mode of threshing in the East, and the instrument here referred to. "The drag consisted of a sort of frame of strong planks made rough at the bottom with hard stones or iron; it was drawn by horses or oxen over the corn-sheaves spread on the floor, the driver sitting upon it. The wain was much like the drag, but had wheels of iron teeth, or edges like a saw. The axle was armed with iron teeth or serrated

16. Thou shalt fan ° them, and | the wind shall carry them away,

o Matt. 3. 12.

NEW TRANSLATION.

16. Thou shalt winnow them, and the wind shall bear them away,  
And the tempest shall scatter them abroad;

wheels throughout; it moved upon three rollers, armed with iron teeth or wheels, to cut the straw. In Syria, they make use of the drag, constructed in the very same manner as above described. This not only forced out the grain, but cut the straw in pieces, for fodder for the cattle, for in the eastern countries they have no hay. The last method is well known from the law of Moses, which forbids the ox to be muzzled, when he treadeth out the corn. Deut. xxv. 4." *Lowth*. "In threshing their corn, the Arabians lay the sheaves down in a certain order, and then lead over them two oxen, dragging a large stone. This mode of separating the ears from the straw is not unlike that of Egypt. "They use oxen, as the ancients did, to beat out their corn, by trampling upon the sheaves, and dragging after them a clumsy machine. This machine is not, as in Arabia, a stone cylinder, nor a plank with sharp stones, as in Syria, but a sort of sledge, consisting of three rollers, fitted with irons, which turn upon axles. A farmer chooses out a level spot in his fields, and has his corn carried thither in sheaves, upon asses or dromedaries. Two oxen are then yoked in a sledge, a driver gets upon it, and drives them backwards and forwards (rather in a circle) upon the sheaves, and fresh oxen succeed in the yoke from time to time. By this operation, the chaff is very much cut down; the whole is then winnowed, and the pure grain thus separated. This mode of threshing out the corn is tedious and inconvenient; it destroys the chaff, and injures the quality of the grain." *Niebuhr*. In another place *Niebuhr* tells us that two parcels or layers of corn are threshed out in a day; and they move each of them as many as eight times, with a wooden fork of five prongs, which they call *meddra*. Afterwards, they throw the

straw into the middle of the ring, where it forms a heap, which grows bigger and bigger; when the first layer is threshed, they replace the straw in the ring, and thresh it as before. Thus, the straw becomes every time smaller, till at last it resembles chopped straw. After this, with the fork just described they cast the whole some yards from thence, and against the wind, which driving back the straw, the corn and the ears not threshed out fall apart from it, and make another heap. A man collects the clods of dirt, and other impurities, to which any corn adheres, and throws them into a sieve. They afterwards place in a ring the heaps, in which a good many entire ears are still found, and drive over them, for four or five hours together, a dozen couples of oxen, joined two and two, till, by absolute trampling, they have separated the grains, which they throw into the air with a shovel to cleanse them. ¶ *Thou shalt thresh the mountains*. The words "mountains" and "hills" in this verse seem designed to denote the kingdoms greater and smaller that should be opposed to the Jews, and that should become subject to them. *Rosenmüller*. Grotius supposes that the prophet refers particularly to the Medes and Babylonians. But perhaps the words are used to denote simply difficulties or obstacles in their way; and the expression may mean that they should be able to overcome all those obstacles, and to subdue all that opposed them. Mountains and hills are in the way, and oppose obstacles to the march of an army. And the prophet may mean simply that they should be able to overcome all their difficulties and all the obstacles in their path, *as if* in a march they should crush all the mountains, and dissipate all the hills by an exertion of power.

16. *Thou shalt fan them*. Keeping up the figure commenced in the pre-

and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in <sup>p</sup> the LORD, and shalt glory <sup>q</sup> in the Holy One of Israel.

17. *When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the*

<sup>p</sup> Rom. 5. 11.

<sup>q</sup> ch. 45. 25.

God of Israel will not forsake them.

18. *I will open rivers <sup>r</sup> in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness <sup>s</sup> a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.*

<sup>r</sup> Ps. 105. 41.

<sup>s</sup> Ps. 107. 35.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

But thou shalt rejoice in JEHOVAH,  
In the Holy One of Israel shalt thou exult.

17. When the poor and needy seek for water, and there  
And their tongue is parched with thirst,  
I, JEHOVAH, will hear them,  
I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.

18. I will open upon the hill streams,  
And in the midst of the valleys fountains;  
I will make the desert a pool of waters,  
And the dry land springs of waters.

vious verse. To fan here means to winnow, an operation which was performed by throwing the threshed grain up with a shovel into the air, and the wind drove the chaff away. So all their enemies, and all the obstacles which were in their way should be scattered. ¶ *And thou shalt rejoice in the LORD.* In view of the aid which he has vouchsafed, and the deliverance which he has wrought for you. ¶ *Shalt glory.* Shalt boast, or shalt exult. You will regard God as the author of your deliverance, and joy in the proofs of his interposition, and of his gracious protection and care.

17. *When the poor and needy seek water.* Water is often used in the Scriptures as an emblem of the provisions of divine mercy, or of the blessings of the gospel of the Redeemer. It is so used because it is necessary to life; because of its purity, and of its abundance. Bursting fountains in a desert, and flowing streams, unexpectedly met with in a dry and thirsty land, are often also employed to denote the comfort and refreshment which the gospel furnishes to sinful and suffering man in his journey through this world. The "poor and needy" here doubtless

refer primarily to the afflicted and suffering captives in Babylon. But the expression of the prophet is general; and the description is as applicable to his people at all times in similar circumstances as it was to them. Tho image here is derived from their anticipated return from Babylon to Judea. The journey lay through a vast pathless desert. See Note on ch. xl. 3. In that journey when they were weary, faint, and thirsty, God would meet and refresh them as if he should open fountains in their way, and plant trees with far-reaching boughs and thick foliage along the road to produce a grateful shade, and make the whole way a pleasant grove. The promise is, that God would be with them, that he would provide for them, that he would sustain and comfort them. As he had met their fathers in their journey from Egypt to the land of Canaan, and had brought water from the flinty rock in the desert (Ex. xv. 22, seq.), so in their journey through the sands of Arabia Deserta he would again meet them, and comfort them, and provide for all their wants.

18. *I will open rivers.* That is, I will cause rivers to flow. See Note, ch.

19. I ' will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the tree together :

† ch. 55. 12.

NEW TRANSLATION.

19. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia,  
And the myrtle, and the oil-tree;  
I will place in the desert the cypress,  
The pine and the box-tree together;

xxxv. 7. The allusion is here doubtless to the miraculous supply of water in the desert when the Israelites had come out of Egypt. God then supplied their wants; and in a similar manner he would always meet his people, and would supply their wants *as if* rivers of cool and pure water were made to flow from dry and barren hills. ¶ *In high places.* The word here used denotes properly barrenness, or nakedness, Job xxxiii. 21; and then a naked hill, a hill that is bare, or destitute of trees. It is applied usually to hills in a desert, Jer. iii. 2, 21; iv. 7, 11; vii. 29; xiv. 6. Such hills, without trees, and in a dry and lonely desert, were of course usually without water. The idea is, that God would refresh them *as if* rivers were made to flow from such hills; and it may not improperly be regarded as a promise that God would meet and bless his people in situations, and from sources where they least expected refreshment and comfort. ¶ *And fountains in the midst of the valleys.* See Note, ch. xxxv. 6; xxx. 25. ¶ *I will make the wilderness, &c.* Note, ch. xxxv. 7.

19. *I will plant in the wilderness.* The image in this verse is one that is frequent in Isaiah. It is designed to show that God would furnish for his people abundant consolations; that he would meet them and bless them in their trials, and when they least expected blessings; that he would furnish unanticipated sources of comfort, and would remove from them their anticipated trials and calamities. The image refers to the anticipated return of the exiles to their own land. That journey

lay through Arabia Deserta—a vast waste—a desert—an uninhabited territory—where they would naturally expect to meet with nothing but barren hills, naked rocks, parched plains, and burning sands. God says that he would bless them in the same manner *as if* in that desolate wilderness he should plant the cedar, and the acacia, and the myrtle, and the fir-tree; and should make the whole distance a grove, where fountains would bubble along their way, and streams burst forth from the hills. Comp. Notes, ch. xxxii. 15. ¶ *The cedar.* The large and beautiful cedar, with lofty height, and extended branches, such as grew on Lebanon, and such as would produce a grateful shade. Comp. Note, ch. ix. 10; xxxvii. 24. ¶ *The shittah tree.* This is the Hebrew name without change, שִׁטָּה, *shittāh*. The Vulgate is *spinam*. The LXX render it πύξον, *the box*. Lowth renders it *the acacia*. Probably the *acacia*, or the *spina Egyptiaca*—the Egyptian thorn of the ancients—is intended by it. It is a large tree, growing abundantly in Egypt and Arabia, and is the tree from which the gum Arabic is obtained. It is covered with large black thorns, and the wood is hard, and when old resembles ebony. ¶ *And the myrtle.* The myrtle is a tree which rises with a shrubby upright stem, eight or ten feet high. Its branches form a dense, full head, closely garnished with oval lanceolate leaves. It has numerous small pale flowers from the axillas, singly on each footstalk, *Encyc.* There are several species of the myrtle, and they are especially distinguished for their form—

20. That they may see and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.
21. Produce <sup>1</sup> your cause, saith the LORD: bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.

<sup>1</sup> *cause to come near.*

NEW TRANSLATION.

20. That they may see and may know,  
And lay it [to heart], and understand together,  
That the hand of JEHOVAH had done this,  
And that the Holy One of Israel hath created it.
21. Produce your cause, saith JEHOVAH;  
Bring forward your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.

ing a dense and close top and thus constituting a valuable tree for shade. It is a tree that grows with great rapidity. ¶ *And the oil tree.* Heb., Tree of oil; i. e., producing oil. Doubtless the *olive* is intended here, from whose fruit oil was obtained in abundance. This was a common tree in Palestine, and was one of the most valued that grew. ¶ *The fir tree.* The word here used, בְּרוֹשׁ, *berōsh*, is commonly rendered, in our version, *fir tree*, Isa. lx. 13; lv. 13; Zech. xi. 2; Hos. xiv. 8, 9; 2 Sam. vi. 5; 1 Kings v. 8, 10; vi. 15, 34; Nah. ii. 3, and in other places. Our translators understood it evidently as referring to the cedar. It is often joined, however, with the cedar (see Note, Isa. xiv. 8; comp. xxxvii. 24; Zech. xi. 2), and evidently denotes another tree, probably of the same class. It is probable that the word usually denotes the *cypress*—an evergreen, and a species of the cedar. There are various kinds of the *cypress*. Some are evergreen, and some are deciduous, as the American white cedar. The wood of these trees is remarkable for its durability. Among the ancients, coffins were made of the wood, and the tree itself was an emblem of mourning. It is here mentioned because its extended branches and dense foliage would produce a grateful shade. ¶ *And the pine.* The LXX render this λευκόν, the white poplar. The Vulgate renders it the *elm*. Gesenius supposes that a species of hard oak, *holm*, or *ilex*, is intended. It is not easy, however, to

determine what species of tree is meant. ¶ *The box tree.* Gesenius supposes that by this word is denoted some tall tree—a species of cedar growing on mount Lebanon that was distinguished by the smallness of its cones, and the upward direction of its branches. With us the word *box* denotes a shrub used for bordering flower-beds; but the word here denotes a *tree*—such as was sufficient to constitute a shade. It was probably one kind or species of the cedar.

20. *That they, &c.* The Jews, the people who shall be rescued from their long captivity, and restored again to their own land. So rich and unexpected would be the blessings; so remarkably would they be manifested—as if in a pathless desert the most beautiful and refreshing trees and fountains should suddenly spring up—that they would have the fullest demonstration that they came from God. It was God's design so to deal with them, that they should have the fullest demonstration of his existence, and of his merciful interposition in their behalf. ¶ *Hath created it.* Has caused it. That is, all this is to be traced to him. In the apocryphal book of Baruch there is an expression respecting the return from Babylon remarkably similar to that which is used here by Isaiah: "Even the woods and every sweet smelling tree shall overshadow Israel by the commandment of God," ch. v. 8.

21. *Produce your cause, &c.* This



22. Let them "bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider<sup>1</sup> them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.

<sup>1</sup> John 13.

<sup>1</sup> set our heart upon.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

22. Let them draw near, and show us what shall happen;  
The preceding things what they are, let them announce;  
That we may consider them, and know their fulfilment;  
Or declare unto us the things that are to come.

address is made to the same persons who are referred to in ver. 1—the worshippers of idols; and the prophet here returns to the subject with reference to a further argumentation on the comparative power of JEHOVAH and idols. In the former part of the chapter, God had urged his claims to confidence from the fact that he had raised up Cyrus; that the idols were weak and feeble compared with him; and from the fact that it was his fixed purpose to defend and preserve his people, and to meet and refresh them when faint and weary. In the verses which follow the 21st, he urges his claims to confidence from the fact that he only was able to *predict future events*, and calls on the worshippers of idols to show their claims in the same manner. This is the "cause" which is now to be tried. ¶ *Bring forth your strong reasons.* Adduce the arguments which you deem to be of the greatest strength and power. Comp. Note on ver. 1. The object is, to call on them to adduce the most convincing demonstration on which they relied, of their power and their ability to save. The argument to which God appeals is, that he had foretold future events. He calls on them to show that they had given, or could give, equal demonstration of their divinity. Lowth regards this as a call on the idol gods to come forth in person and show their strength. But the interpretation which supposes that it refers to their reasons, or their arguments, accords better with the parallelism, and with the connexion.

22. Let them bring them forth. Let the idols, or the worshippers of idols,

bring forth the evidences of their divine nature and power. Or more probably it means, "let them draw near, or approach." ¶ *And shew us what shall happen.* None but the true God can discern the future, and predict what is to occur. To be able to do this, is therefore a proof of divinity, and God often appeals to this as a demonstration of his own divine character. See ch. xlv. 7, 8; xlv. 3—7; xlv. 9, 10. This idea, that none but the true God can know all things, and can with certainty foretell future events, is one that is obvious, and was admitted even by the heathen. See Xenophon Cyrop., lib. i.: "The immortal gods know all things, both the past, the present, and those things which shall proceed from each thing." It was on this belief also that the worshippers of idols endeavoured to sustain the credit of their idol gods; and accordingly nearly all the credit which the oracle at Delphi, and other shrines, obtained, arose from the remarkable sagacity which was evinced in predicting future events, or the skillful ambiguity in which they so couched their responses as to be able to preserve their influence whatever might be the result. ¶ *Let them shew the former things, what they be.* The idea in this passage seems to be, "Let them foretell the entire series of events; let them predict, in their order, the things which shall first occur as well as those which shall finally happen. Let them not select merely an isolated and unconnected event in futurity, but let them declare those which shall have a mutual relation and dependency, and whose causes are

23. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye *are* gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold *it* together.

24. Behold, ye *are* <sup>1</sup> of nothing, and your work <sup>2</sup> of nought: an abomination *is he that* chooseth you.

<sup>1</sup> or, worse than nothing.  
<sup>2</sup> or, worse than of a viper.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

23. Announce to us the things that are to come hereafter,  
And we will know that ye are gods;  
Yea, do good or do evil,  
That we may be astonished, and see it together.

24. Behold ye are less than nothing,

now hid." The argument in the passage is, that it required a far more profound knowledge to predict the *series* of events as they should actually occur; to foretel their *order* of occurrence, than it did to foretel one single isolated occurrence in futurity. The latter, the false prophets of the heathen, the conductors of the heathen oracles, often undertook to do; and undoubtedly they often evinced great sagacity in doing it. But they never undertook to detail minutely a *series* of occurrences, and to state the manner, and time, and *order* in which they would happen. In the Scriptures it is the common way to foretel the *order* of events, or a *series* of transactions pertaining often to many individuals or nations, and stretching far into futurity, or distant nations. And it is perfectly manifest that none could do this but God. Comp. ch. xlvi. 10. ¶ *Or declare us things for to come.* Declare *any* event that is to occur; anything in the future. If they cannot predict the *order* of things, or a *series* of events, let them clearly foretel *any* single event in futurity.

23. *That we may know that ye are gods.* The prediction of future events is the highest evidence of omniscience, and, of course, of divinity. In this passage it is *admitted* that if they could do it, it would prove that they had a divine nature, and were worthy of adoration; and it is *demanded* as reasonable, that *if* they were gods, they should be able to make such a prediction as would demonstrate that they were invested with a divine nature. ¶ *Yea, do good, or do evil. Do something; show*

that you have some power; either defend your friends and worshippers, or prostrate your foes; accomplish *something*—anything, good or bad, that shall prove that you have power. This is said in opposition to the character which is usually given to idols in the Scriptures—that they were dumb, deaf, dead, inactive, powerless. See Psalm cxv. The command here to "do evil" means to punish their enemies, or to inflict vengeance on their foes; and the idea is, that they had no power to do this or to do anything; either to do good to their worshippers, or harm to their enemies; and thus they showed that they were no gods. The same idea is expressed in Jer x. 5: "They [idols] are upright as the palm-tree, but speak not; they must needs be borne because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good." ¶ *That we may be dismayed.* Note, ver. 10. 'The word "we" here refers to those who were not the friends and worshippers of idols, or to those who were the friends and worshippers of JEHOVAH. "That I, JEHOVAH, and my friends and worshippers, may be alarmed, and afraid of what idols may be able to do." God and his people were regarded as the foes of idols, and God here calls on them to prove that there is any reason why he and his people should be afraid of their power. ¶ *And behold it together.* That we may all see it; that I and my people may have full demonstration of your power.

24. *Behold, ye are of nothing.* Marg., "worse than nothing." This refers to

25. I \* have raised up *one* from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name; and he shall come upon princes as *upon* mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.

† verse 2.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

And your work less than nought;  
An abomination is he that chooseth you!

25. I have raised up one from the north, and he cometh;  
From the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name.  
He shall come upon princes as upon mortar,  
And as the potter treadeth down the clay.

idols; and the idea is, that they were utterly vain and powerless; they were as unable to render aid to their worshippers as *absolute nothingness* would be, and all their confidence in them was vain and foolish. ¶ *And your work.* All that you do, or all that it is pretended that you do. ¶ *Of nought.* Marg., "or, worse than a viper." The word used here in the Hebrew text, נֶפֶשׁ, occurs in no other place. Gesenius supposes that this is a corrupt reading for נֶפֶשׁ נֶפֶשׁ, *nothing*, and so our translators have regarded it, and in this opinion most expositors agree. See Rosenmüller and Lowth *in loco*. The Jewish Rabbins suppose generally that it is the same word as נֶפֶשׁ, *a viper*, according to the reading in the margin. But this interpretation is contrary to the connexion, as well as the ancient versions. The Vulgate and Chaldee render it, "of nought." The Syriac renders it, "your works are of the sword." This is probably one of the few instances in which there has been a corruption of the Hebrew text. Comp. Isa. xl. 17; xli. 12, 29. ¶ *An abomination.* An object of abhorrence; he is regarded as abominable by God. ¶ *Is he that chooseth you.* They who select idols as the object of worship, and offer to them homage.

25. ¶ *I have raised up one.* God, by the prophet, had in the previous verses shown that the idols had no power of predicting future events. He states, so to speak, the question of his divinity on that point, and the whole controversy

between him and them is to be decided by the inquiry whether they had the power of foretelling what would come to pass. God here urges *his* claims to divinity, and to the confidence of his people on this ground, that he had power to foretel future events. In illustration of this, he appeals to the fact that he had raised up, *i. e.*, would afterwards raise up, Cyrus, in accordance with his predictions, and in such a way that it would be distinctly seen that he had this power of foretelling future events. To see the force of this argument, it must be remembered that the Jews are contemplated as in Babylon, and near the close of their captivity; that God had by the prophets, and especially by Isaiah, distinctly foretold the fact that he would raise up Cyrus to be their deliverer; that these predictions were uttered at least a hundred and fifty years before the time of their fulfilment; and that they would then have abundant evidence that they were accomplished. To these recorded predictions and to their fulfilment, God here appeals, and designs that in that future time when they should be in exile, his people should have evidence that He was worthy of their entire confidence, and that even the heathen should see from these fulfilments of prophecy that Jehovah was the true God, and that the idols were nothing. The personage referred to here is undoubtedly Cyrus. See Notes on ver. 2, comp. ch. xlv. 1. ¶ *From the north.* In ver. 2, he is said to have been raised up "from the east." Both were true.

26. Who hath declared from *there* is none that sheweth, yea, the beginning, that we may *there* is none that declareth, yea, know? and beforetime, that we *there* is none that heareth your may say, *He* is righteous? yea, words.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

26. Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know?  
 And in former time, that we may say, "It is true"?  
 Truly there was no one that foretold it;  
 Truly there was no one that declared it;  
 Truly there was no one that heard your words.

Cyrus was born in Persia, in the country called in the Scriptures "the east;" but he early went to Media, and came from Media under the direction of his uncle, Cyaxares, when he attacked and subdued Babylon. Media was situated on the north, and north-east of Babylon. ¶ *From the rising of the sun.* The east—the land of the birth of Cyrus. ¶ *Shall he call upon my name.* This expression means, probably, that he should acknowledge JEHOVAH to be the true God, and recognise him as the source of all his success. This Cyrus did in his proclamation respecting the restoration of the Jews to their own land: "Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, JEHOVAH, God of heaven, hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth," &c., Ezra i. 2. There is no decided evidence that Cyrus regarded himself as a worshipper of JEHOVAH, or that he was a pious man, but he was brought to make a public recognition of JEHOVAH as the true God, and to feel that he owed the success of his arms to him. ¶ *And he shall come upon princes.* Upon the kings of the nations against whom he shall make war. See vs. 2, 3. The word here rendered "princes," from נָכַר, or נָכַר, denotes properly a deputy, a prefect, a governor, or one under another, and is usually applied to the governors of provinces, or the Babylonian princes, or magistrates. Jer. li. 23, 28, 57; Ezek. xxiii. 6, 12, 33; Dan. iii. 2, 27; vi. 7. It is sometimes applied, however, to the chiefs and rulers in Jerusalem, in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra ix. 2; Neh. ii. 16;

iv. 14, 19; v. 7. Here, however, it is used as a general term; and the sense is, that he would tread down and subdue the kings and princes of the nations that he invaded. ¶ *As upon mortar, &c.* He would completely subdue them. See Note, ch. x. 6.

26. *Who hath declared from the beginning.* The meaning of this passage is, "there is no one among the diviners, and soothsayers, and worshippers of idols, who has declared or foretold this. No one of them has predicted the birth, the character, and the conquests of Cyrus. There is among the heathen no recorded prediction on the subject, as there is among the Jews—the worshippers of the true God—that when he shall have come, it may be said that a prediction is accomplished." ¶ *And beforetime.* Formerly; in former times; before the event occurred. ¶ *That we may say.* That it may be said; that there may be evidence, or reason, for the affirmation. ¶ *He is righteous.* The words "he is" are not in the Hebrew. The original is simply "righteous," צַדִּיק, *tzaddiq*, just, i. e., it is just, or true; the prediction is fulfilled. It does not refer to the character of God, but to the certainty of the fulfilment of the prediction. ¶ *There is none that sheweth.* There is no one among the worshippers of false gods, the soothsayers and necromancers, that has predicted these events. ¶ *None that heareth your words.* There is no one that has heard such a prediction among you.

27. The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one <sup>y</sup> that bringeth good <sup>z</sup> tidings.

<sup>y</sup> ch. 40. 9.

<sup>z</sup> Luke 2. 10, 11.

28. For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer <sup>1</sup> a word.

<sup>1</sup> return.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

27. I first said to Zion, "Behold, behold them!"  
And I gave to Jerusalem the messenger of good tidings!  
28. For I looked, and there was no man;  
And from among them, and there was no counsellor,  
And I asked of them, and they returned no answer.

27. *The first shall say to Zion.* This translation is unhappy. It does not convey any clear meaning, nor is it possible from the translation to conjecture what the word "first" refers to. The correct rendering undoubtedly is, "*I first said to Zion,*" &c.; and the sense is, "*I, JEHOVAH, first gave to Zion the announcement of these things. I predicted the restoration of the Jews to their own land, and the raising up of the man who should deliver them; and I only have uttered the predictions respecting the time and circumstances in which these events would occur. The LXX render it, 'I will first give notice to Zion, and I will comfort Jerusalem in the way.'*" The Chaldee renders it, "*The words of consolation which the prophets have uttered respecting Zion in the beginning, lo, they are about to come to pass.*" The sense of the passage is, that no one of the idol gods, or their prophets, had predicted these events. The first intimation of them had been by JEHOVAH, and this had been made to Zion, and designed for its consolation. ¶ *Behold, behold them.* Lo, they are about to come to pass; or these events will occur. Zion, or Jerusalem, was to behold them, for they were intended to effect its deliverance, and secure its welfare. The words "Zion" and "Jerusalem" here seem intended to denote the Jewish people in general, or to refer to Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish nation. The intimation had been given in the capital of the nation,

and thence to the entire people. ¶ *And I will give, &c.* Or rather, I give, or I have given. The passage means, that the bearer of the good tidings of the raising up of a deliverer should be sent to Jerusalem, or to the Jewish people. To them the joyful news was announced long before the event, the news of the raising up of such a man—an event of so much interest to them—was made to them long before the heathens had any intimation of it; and it would occur as the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy recorded in Zion, or among the Jews. The prophet refers here, doubtless, in the main, to his own prophecies uttered so long before the event should occur, and which would be recorded among the Jews, and distinctly known when they should be in exile in Babylon. ¶ *Good tidings.* The good tidings of deliverance from the long and painful captivity in Babylon.

28. *For I beheld.* I looked upon the heathen world, among all the pretended prophets, and the priests of pagan idolatry. ¶ *And there was no man.* No man among them who could predict these future events. ¶ *Even among them.* Among all the soothsayers, magicians, necromancers, &c., of the heathen worship. ¶ *No counsellor.* No one qualified to give counsel, or that could anticipate by his sagacity what would take place. There was no one who could give counsel about future events. ¶ *That, when I asked of them.* In the manner referred to in this

29. Behold, they *are* all vanity; | molten images *are* wind and con-  
their works *are* nothing: their | fusion.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

29. Lo, they are all vanity;  
Their works are nothing;  
Wind and emptiness are their molten images.

chapter. There is no one of whom it could be inquired what would take place in future times. ¶ *Could answer a word.* They were unable to discern what would come to pass, or to predict the events which are referred to here.

29. *Behold, they are all vanity.* They are unable to predict future events; they are unable to defend their friends, and to injure their enemies. They are entirely powerless. This is the conclusion of the trial or debate (vs. 1—21), and that conclusion is, that they were utterly destitute of strength, that they were nothing, and that they were entirely unworthy of confidence and regard. ¶ *Their molten images.* Their images that are cast, or founded. See Note, ch. xl. 19. ¶ *Are wind.* Have no solidity, or power. They are emptiness and vanity; and they are unable to aid their friends or distress their foes. They can do nothing, and JEHOVAH alone is worthy of confidence and regard. The doctrine of the whole chapter is, that confidence should be reposed in God, and in him alone. He is the friend of his people, and he is able to protect them. He will deliver them from the hand of all their enemies; and he will be always their God, protector, and guide. The idols of the heathen are nothing. They have no power; and it is folly, as well as sin, to trust in them, or to suppose that they can aid their friends. It may be added, also, that it is equally vain to trust in *any* being for salvation but God. He only is able to protect and defend us; and it is a source of unspeakable consolation now, as it was in times past, that he is the friend of his people; that he never forgets his promises to them; and that, in times of deepest darkness and distress, he can raise up deliverers, as he did Cyrus,

and will in his own way and time rescue his people from all their calamities.

## CHAPTER XLII.

## ANALYSIS.

This chapter is a continuation of the same general subject which was presented in the two previous chapters. It is to be regarded (see the analysis of ch. xl.) as addressed to the exile Jews in Babylon, and near the close of their captivity, and the general object is to comfort them, to induce them to repose confidence in God, and to assure them of deliverance. The primary purpose of these chapters, therefore, is to direct the attention to him who was to be raised up from the east, to rescue them from their bondage—that is, Cyrus. But in doing this, the mind of the prophet, by the laws of prophetic suggestion (see Introduction to Isaiah § 7, 3), is also easily directed to a far greater deliverer, and so entirely and intently, at times, as to lose sight altogether of Cyrus; and the restoration of the Jews to their own land is forgotten in the sublimer contemplation of the redemption of the world. Such appears to be the case here. In the previous chapters, the attention of the prophet had been particularly directed to Cyrus, with a slight occasional reference to the Messiah. In the commencement of this chapter, he seems to have lost sight of Cyrus altogether, and to have fixed the attention wholly on the future Messiah. See Notes on ver. 1. The chapter is, as I apprehend, occupied mainly, or entirely, with a description of the character and work of the Messiah. The evidence of this opinion will be adduced in the Notes on the chapter itself. The design for which the Messiah is introduced is to convince the Jews that they

## CHAPTER XLII.

## 1. Behold my servant, whom I

uphold; mine elect, <sup>a</sup> *in whom my soul delighteth*; <sup>b</sup> *I have put my*

<sup>a</sup> Ephes. 1. 4.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. 17. 5.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

1. Behold my servant whom I uphold;  
My chosen in whom my soul delighteth;

would be restored to their own land; that God was their protector, and that it was his purpose that the long promised Prince and Saviour should yet arise from their restored and recovered nation. Of course, if this *was* to occur, their national existence would be preserved. There is, therefore, in the chapter a reference to their return to their own land, though the main scope relates to the Messiah.

The chapter may be regarded as divided into two portions. In the **FIRST**, from ver. 1 to ver. 9, the prophet describes the Messiah. JEHOVAH is introduced as speaking, and in vs. 1—4, he describes his character. He is the servant of JEHOVAH, endowed with the fulness of the divine Spirit; he is meek, and lowly, and gentle, and kind; he is unobtrusive, and noiseless in his movements, and yet securing the conquest of truth. JEHOVAH then, vs. 5—7, addresses the Messiah himself directly, and states the object for which he had appointed him, to be a light to the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind, and to be the pledge of the covenant between him and his people, and in general to accomplish the work of redemption. In vs. 8, 9, JEHOVAH turns to the people for whom the prophecy was given, and awakens their attention to the subject, reminds them of the predictions which had been made, and says that the fulfilment of this prophecy, like all former predictions, would demonstrate his superiority over idols, and show that he was the true God.

The **SECOND** part of the chapter, vs. 10—25, consists mainly of a call on the world, and especially on the exile Jews, to rejoice in view of the truth here announced; and a statement of the consequences which will follow from this great and glorious event. This general

call contains the following parts:—

(1.) In the exordium, vs. 10, 12, JEHOVAH calls on the inhabitants of all the earth to praise and glorify his name, and makes his appeal to those who are upon the sea, the inhabitants of the isles, the wilderness and solitary places, the villages and the inhabitants of the rock, as all interested in it, and all having occasion to rejoice on account of this glorious event.

(2.) In vs. 13—17, JEHOVAH speaks particularly of the deliverance of his people, and of the certainty of its being accomplished. He had long restrained himself; he had long held his peace; he had long delayed to interpose; but now he would come forth in his strength, and annihilate his foes and redeem his people, and make darkness light before them, while all the worshippers of idols should be left without defence or aid.

(3.) The people of Israel are next addressed directly, and their character and duty presented. vs. 18—25. They are addressed as a people blind and deaf, and are admonished to rouse themselves, and to strive to attain to true knowledge. Notwithstanding all that God had done for them, and all his gracious interposition, they had hardened their hearts, and shut their eyes, and had steeled themselves against every good impression. For this God had punished them. He had given them as a spoil to their enemies, and a prey to plunderers, and had poured upon them the fury of his anger, and overwhelmed them in grievous and long continued calamities. They were now called on to hear, and attend to his instructions and promises, and henceforward be an obedient people.

1. Behold. Lo. This word is de-

spirit upon him; he shall bring | forth judgment to the Gentiles.

NEW TRANSLATION.

I have put my spirit upon him,  
He shall make [his] religion extend to the Gentiles.

signed to call attention to the person that is immediately referred to. It is an intimation that the subject is of importance, and should command their regard. ¶ *My servant*. This term denotes properly any one who acknowledges or worships God; any one who is regarded as serving, or obeying him. It is a term which may be applied to any one who is esteemed to be a pious man, or who is obedient to the commands of God; and is often applied to the people of God, Gen. i. 17; 1 Chron. vi. 49; 2 Chron. xxiv. 9; Dan. vi. 20; ix. 11; Titus i. 1; James i. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 16; Rev. vii. 3; xv. 3. Nothing can be argued here from the use of the term in regard to the person referred to. The word *servant* may be applied either to Isaiah, or Cyrus, or the Messiah; and the question to whom it refers here is to be decided, not by the mere use of the term, but by the connexion, and by the characteristics which are ascribed to him who is here designated as the "servant" of JEHOVAH. There have been no less than five different views in regard to the personage here referred to; and as in the interpretation of the whole prophecy in this chapter, everything depends on this question, it is of importance briefly to examine the opinions which have been entertained. I. One has been that it refers to the Jewish people. The translators of the Septuagint version evidently so regarded it. They render it, Ἰακώβ ὁ παῖς μου, α. τ. λ. "Jacob is my servant, I will uphold him; Israel is my chosen one, my soul hath embraced him," &c. Jarchi also so interprets the passage, but so modifies it as to understand by it, "the righteous in Israel;" and among the moderns, Rosenmüller, Paulus, and some others adopt this interpretation. The principal reason alleged for this interpretation is, that the phrase "ser-

vant of JEHOVAH," is elsewhere used in a collective sense, and applied to the Jewish people. Rosenmüller appeals particularly to ch. xli. 8, 9, and to ver. 19 of this chapter, and to ch. xlv. 21; xlv. 4; xlviii. 20; and argues that it is to be presumed that the prophet used the phrase in an uniform manner, and must therefore be supposed here also to refer to the Jewish people. But the objections are insuperable. (1.) In ver. 6, the servant of Jehovah here referred to is plainly distinguished from the people, where God says, "I will give thee for a covenant of [with] the people." (2.) The description which the prophet gives here of the character of "the servant" of JEHOVAH, as meek, mild, gentle, quiet, and humble (vs. 2, 3), is strikingly *unlike* the character which the prophet elsewhere gives of the people, and is as strikingly *like* the character which is everywhere given of the Messiah. (3.) It was not true of the Jewish people that they were appointed, as is here said of "the servant" of God, ver. 7, to "open the blind eyes, to bring the prisoners out of prison," &c. This is evidently applicable only to a teacher, a deliverer, or a guide; and in no sense *can* it be applied to the collected Jewish people. II. A second opinion has been, that by the "servant of JEHOVAH" Cyrus was intended. Many of the Jewish interpreters have adopted this view, and not a few of the German critics. The principal argument for this opinion is, that what precedes, and what follows, relates particularly to Cyrus; and an appeal is made particularly to ch. xlv. 1, where he is called the Anointed, and to ch. xlv. 28, where he is called the "Shepherd." But to this view, also, the objections are obvious. (1.) The name "servant of Jehovah" is, it is believed, nowhere given to Cyrus. (2.) The description here by no means



agrees with Cyrus. That he was distinguished for justice and equity is admitted (see Note in ch. xli. 2), but the expressions here used, that God would "put his spirit upon him," that he should not cry, nor lift up his voice, so that it should be heard in the streets, is one that is by no means applicable to a man whose life was spent mainly in the tumults of war, and in the pomp and carnage of battle and conquest. How *can* this description be applied to a man who trod down nations, and subdued kings, and who shed rivers of blood? III. Others suppose that the prophet refers to himself. Among the Jews, Aben Ezra, and among others *Grotius* and *Doederlin* held this opinion. The only reason for this is, that in ch. xx. 3, the name "servant" of *JEHOVAH* is given to Isaiah. But the objection to this is plain, and insuperable. (1.) Nothing can be urged, as we have seen, from the mere use of the word "servant." (2.) It is inconceivable that a humble prophet like Isaiah should have applied to himself a description expressive of so much importance as is here attributed to the servant of God. How could the establishment of a new covenant with the people of God, and the conversion of the heathen nations (vs. 6, 7), be ascribed to Isaiah? And in what sense is it true that *he* was appointed to open the eyes of the blind, and to lead the prisoners from the prison? IV. A fourth opinion, which it may be proper just to notice, is that which is advocated by *Gesenius*, that the phrase here refers to the prophets taken *collectively*. But this opinion is one that scarce deserves a serious refutation. For (1.) the name "SERVANT of Jehovah" is never given to any *collection* of the prophets. (2.) Any such *collection* of the prophets is a mere creature of the fancy. When did they exist? Who composed the collection? And how could the name "SERVANT" designate them? (3.) Of what *collection* of men could it be conceived, that the description here given could be applied, that such a collection should not strive, nor cry, that it should be a covenant of the people, and that it should

be the means of the conversion of the Gentile world? V. The fifth opinion, therefore, is, that it refers to the Messiah; and the direct arguments in favor of this, independent of the fact that it is applicable to no other one, are so strong as to put it beyond debate. A few of them may be referred to. (1.) This is the interpretation of the Chaldee Paraphrase, which has retained the exposition of the ancient and early Jews. "Behold my servant, THE MESSIAH; I will cause him to come near; my chosen," &c. (2.) There are such applications of the passage in the New Testament to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, as to leave no room to doubt that, in view of the sacred writers, the passage had this reference. Thus in Luke ii. 32, he is spoken of as "a light to lighten the Gentiles." Comp. ver. 6 of the chapter before us. In Acts xxvi. 18, Paul speaks of him as given to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light." Comp. Isa. xlii. 7. In Matt. iii. 17, God says of the Redeemer, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,"—language remarkably similar to the passage before us (ver. 1), where he says, "mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." And the whole inquiry is put to rest by the fact that Matthew, in ch. xii. 17—21, expressly and directly applies the passage to the Lord Jesus, and says that it was fulfilled in him. (3.) It may be added, that the entire description, as we shall see, is one that is exactly and entirely applicable to the Lord Jesus. It is *as* applicable as if it had been made *after* he had appeared among men, and as if it were the language of biography, and not of prophecy. It is an exceedingly beautiful, and tender description of the Son of God; nor *can* there be any objection to its application to him, except what arises from a general purpose not to apply *any* part of the Old Testament to him if it can be avoided. I shall regard the passage, therefore, as designed to be applicable to him, and him alone; and suppose that the design of the Spirit here in introducing this reference to the Messiah is, to comfort the hearts of

2. He shall not cry, nor lift up, | nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

2. He shall not cry aloud, nor raise a clamor,  
Nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

the exile Jews with the assurance that they *must* be restored to their own land, because it was from them that the Messiah was to proceed, and from them that the true religion was to be spread around the world. ¶ *Whom I uphold.* Whom I sustain, or protect—i. e., who is the object of my affection and care. The word means that God kept, held, or supported him, as one that had his confidence and affection. In Matt. iii. 17, the expression is, “in whom I am well pleased.” And so in Matt. xii. 18, it is rendered, “my servant, whom I have chosen.” ¶ *Mine elect.* My chosen one; or the one whom I have selected to accomplish my great purposes. It implies that God had designated or appointed him for the purpose. In Matt. xii. 18, it is rendered “my beloved.” It implies that he was the object of the divine favor, and that God had chosen or appointed him to perform the work of a Messiah. ¶ *In whom my soul delighteth.* This language is applied to the Lord Jesus in Matt. iii. 17, and in Matt. xii. 18. God regarded him as qualified for his work; he approved of what he did; he was well pleased with all his words, and thoughts, and plans. The word “*soul*” here is equivalent to *I* myself; in whom *I* delight. ¶ *I have put my spirit upon him.* Comp. John iii. 34. “For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.” The Lord Jesus was divine, yet as mediator he is everywhere represented as “the anointed” of God, or as endowed with the influences of the Holy Spirit. See Note, ch. xi. 2. See also Isa. lxi. 1, where the Messiah says of himself, “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me,” &c. Comp. Luke iv. 18. Before he entered upon his work, the Spirit of God descended on him at his baptism (Matt. iii. 17), and in all his work he showed

that he was endowed abundantly with that Spirit, and was like God. ¶ *He shall bring forth judgment.* The word “judgment,” מִשְׁפָּט, *mishpāt*, is used in a great variety of significations. It properly means *judgment*, i. e., the act of judging, Lev. xix. 15; or the place of judgment, Eccl. iii. 16; or a cause, or suit before a judge, Num. xxvii. 5; or a sentence of a judge, 1 Kings iii. 28; and thence guilt or crime, for which one is judged, Jer. li. 9. It also means right, rectitude, justice; a law, or statute; a claim, privilege, or due; also manner, custom, or fashion, &c., or an ordinance, or institution. Here it is used, probably, in the sense of the order or institution that would be introduced under the Messiah; the institutions of religion which he would establish; and it means that he would set up or establish the true religion among the Gentiles. The laws or institutions of the true religion he would extend to the heathen world. ¶ *To the Gentiles.* This is one of the many declarations which occur in Isaiah, that the Messiah would extend the true religion to the pagan nations, and that they should be brought to participate in its privileges.

2. *He shall not cry.* He will not make a clamor, or noise; he will not be boisterous, in the manner of a man of strife and contention. ¶ *Nor lift up.* That is, his voice. ¶ *Nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.* He shall be mild, gentle, and humble in his demeanor. He shall not be disposed to contention and strife; he shall not use loud and angry words, as they do who are engaged in conflict; but all his teaching shall be gentle, humble, and mild. How well this agrees with the character of the Lord Jesus, it is not necessary to pause to show. He was uniformly un-

3. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the <sup>1</sup> smoking flax shall he not <sup>2</sup> quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

or, dimly burning.

<sup>2</sup> quench it.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

3. The bruised reed shall he not break;  
And the dimly-burning flax shall he not quench;  
He shall establish his religion in truth.

ostentatious, modest, and retiring. He sought no display; he did not even desire that his deeds should be blazoned abroad; but he sought to be withdrawn from the world, and to pursue his humble path in perfect peace.

3. *A bruised reed.* The word *reed* means the cane, or calamus, which grows up in marshy or wet places. Isa. xxxvi. 6. See Note, ch. xliii. 24. The word, therefore, literally applies to that which is fragile, weak, easily waved by the wind, or broken down; and stands in contrast with an oak, or a lofty and firm tree. Comp. Matt. xi. 7. "What went ye out in the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind." The word here, therefore, may be applied to men that are conscious of feebleness and sin, that are moved and broken by calamity; that feel that they have no strength to bear up against the ills of life. The word *bruised*, רָצֹץ, *rätzütz*, means, that which is broken, or crushed, but not entirely broken off. Applied to a reed, it may denote one which, by violence, has been trodden down and crushed, though not broken off. As used here, it may denote those who are in themselves naturally feeble, and who have been crushed or broken down by a sense of sin, by calamity, or by affliction. We speak familiarly of *crushing* or *breaking down* by affliction; and the phrase here is intensive and emphatic—denoting those who are, at best, like a reed—feeble, and fragile, and easily moved; and who, in addition to that, have been broken and oppressed by a sense of their sins, or by calamity. ¶ *Shall he not break.* Shall he not break off. He will not tear the broken reed asunder by violence. He will not carry on the work of destruction, and

entirely crush or break it. And the idea is, that he will not make those already broken down with a sense of sin and with calamity, more wretched. He will not deepen their afflictions, or augment their trials, or multiply their sorrows. He will rather comfort, alleviate, and sustain them; and will bind them up and restore them. The sense is, that he will be gentle, tender, and kind; he will have an affectionate regard for the broken-hearted, the humble, the penitent, and the afflicted. Luther has well expressed this: "He does not cast away, nor crush, nor condemn the wounded in conscience, those who are terrified in view of their sins; the weak in faith and practice; but watches over and cherishes them, makes them whole, and affectionately embraces them." The expression is parallel to that which occurs in ch. lxi. 1, where it is said of the Messiah, "He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted;" and to the declaration in ch. l. 4, where it is said, "that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." The idea is that of great tenderness, gentleness, and kindness, to those who are conscious of their feebleness, and who are oppressed and borne down with a sense of their sins. ¶ *The smoking flax.* The word here used denotes *flax*, and then a *wick* that is made of it. The word rendered *smoking*, נִרְיָה, means that which is weak, small, thin, feeble; then that which is just ready to go out, or to be extinguished; and the phrase refers literally to the expiring wick of a lamp, when the oil is almost consumed, and when it shines with a feeble and dying lustre. It may denote here a state of humble and feeble piety, the condition of one who is feeble, and dis-

4. He shall not fail nor be <sup>1</sup> ment in the earth: and the isles discouraged, till he have set judg- shall wait for his <sup>c</sup> law.

<sup>1</sup> broken.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. 49. 10.

NEW TRANSLATION.

4. He shall not fail nor be weary,  
Till he shall have established religion in the earth,  
And distant nations shall wait for his law.

heartened, and whose love to God seems almost ready to expire. And the promise that he will not extinguish or quench that, means that he would cherish, and feed, and cultivate it; he would supply it with grace as with oil to cherish the dying flame, and cause it to be enkindled, and to rise with a high and steady brilliancy. The whole passage is descriptive of the Redeemer, who is gentle, and tender, and kind; who nourishes the most feeble piety in the hearts of his people, and who will not suffer true religion in the soul ever to become wholly extinct. It may be feeble and languid; it may seem almost ready to die; it may seem as if the slightest breath of misfortune or opposition would extinguish it for ever; it may be like the dying flame that hangs on the point of the wick, but if there be true religion, it will not be extinguished, but will be enkindled to a pure and glowing flame, and it will yet rise high, and burn brightly. ¶ *He shall bring forth judgment.* See ver. 1. The word "judgment" here evidently denotes the true religion; the laws, institutions, and appointments of God. ¶ *Unto truth.* Matthew (ch. xii. 20) renders this, "unto victory." The meaning in Isaiah is, that he shall establish his religion according to truth; he shall faithfully announce the true precepts of religion, and shall secure their ascendancy among men. He shall bring it forth, or conduct it through the world, until truth shall have the ascendancy, and its power shall be felt and recognised everywhere. It shall overcome all falsehood, and all idolatry, and shall obtain a final triumph in all nations. Thus explained, it is clear that Matthew has retained the general idea of the passage, though he has not quoted it literally.

4. *He shall not fail.* He shall not be weak, feeble, or disheartened. His purpose shall not become languid or remiss. However much opposition he may meet with; however much he may be persecuted; however feeble the means which he may employ; and however much there may be that shall tend to discourage, yet his purpose is fixed, and he will pursue it with steadiness and ardor until the great work shall be fully accomplished. He has formed his plan, and that plan shall be fully and completely effected. There may be an allusion in the Hebrew word here, קָהָה, *yikkhhēh*, to that which is applied to the flax, קָהָה, *kēhāh*; and the idea may be, that he shall not become in his purposes like the smoking, flickering, dying flame of a lamp; there shall be no indication that his purposes are about to fail, or that there is any want of determination, and resolution, and firmness, in their execution. There shall never be any indication, even amidst all embarrassments, that it is his intention to abandon his plan of extending the true religion through all the world. Such also should be the fixed and determined purposes of his people. Their zeal should never fail; their ardor should never grow languid. ¶ *Nor be discouraged.* Margin, *broken.* The Hebrew word, פָּרַץ, *yārūtz*, may be derived either from פָּרַץ, *rātzūtz*, to break, to break in pieces; or from פָּרַץ, to run, to move hastily, to rush upon any one. Our translators have adopted the former. Gesenius also supposes that this is the true interpretation of the word, and that it means, that he would not be broken—i. e., checked in his zeal, or discouraged by any opposition. The latter interpretation is preferred by

5. Thus saith God the LORD, cometh out of it; he that giveth he that created the heavens, and breath unto the people upon it, stretched them out: he that spread and spirit to them that walk forth the earth, and that which therein:

NEW TRANSLATION.

5. Thus saith the God, JEHOVAH,  
Who created the heavens, and stretched them out;  
Who spread forth the earth, and that which it produceth,  
Who giveth breath to the people upon it,  
And spirit to those who walk therein;

Vitringa, Rosenmüller, Hengstenberg, and others. The Chaldee renders it, "and shall not labor," i. e., shall not be fatigued or discouraged. The LXX render it, "he shall shine out, and not be broken." The connexion seems to require the sense which our translators have given to it, and according to this the sense is, "he shall not become weary, broken in spirit, or discouraged; he shall persevere amidst all opposition and embarrassment, until he shall accomplish his purposes. We have a similar phraseology when we speak of a man's being *broken* in heart; *heart-broken* and discouraged. Christ would be resolute, and firm, and undaunted, until he would secure the universal prevalence of the truth, and of pure religion. ¶ *Till he have set judgment*, &c. Till he has secured the prevalence of the true religion in all the world. ¶ *And the isles*. Distant nations, (see Note, ch. xli. 1); the heathen nations. The expression is equivalent to saying that the Gentiles shall be desirous of receiving the religion of the Messiah, and shall wait for it. See Notes on ch. ii. 3. ¶ *Shall wait*. They shall expect, or desire, or wish for his law. They shall be in a position that shall demand it; they shall be dissatisfied with their own religions, and see that their idol gods are unable to aid them; and they shall be in a posture of *waiting* for some new religion that shall meet their wants, and the religion of the Messiah shall be thus adapted to their condition. It cannot mean that they shall wait for it, or expect it in the sense of their already having a know-

ledge of it, but that their sad, and desolate, and lost condition, their being sensible that their own religions cannot save them, may be represented as a condition of waiting for some better system. It has been true, as in the Sandwich Islands, and in the South Sea Islands, that the heathen have been so dissatisfied with their own idol worship, as to cast away their idols, and to be without *any* religion, and thus to be in a waiting posture for some new and better system. And it may be true yet, that the heathen shall become extensively dissatisfied with their idolatry; that the hold of false religions shall be loosened; that they shall be convinced that some better system is necessary, and that they may thus be prepared to welcome the gospel when it shall be proposed to them. It may be, that in this manner God intends to overcome and remove the now apparently insuperable obstacles to the spread of the gospel in the heathen world. The LXX render this, "And in his name shall the Gentiles trust," which form has been retained by Matthew, ch. xii. 21. ¶ *His law*. His commands, the institutions of his religion. The word "law" is often used in the Scriptures to denote the whole of religion.

5. *Thus saith God the LORD*. This verse commences a new form of discourse. It is still JEHOVAH who speaks; but in the previous verses he had spoken of the Messiah in the third person; here he is introduced as speaking to him directly. He introduces the discourse by dwelling at length on his own *power*, and enumerating his attri-

6. I the LORD have called thee and give thee for a covenant of in righteousness, and will hold the people, for a light <sup>d</sup> of the thine hand, and will keep thee, Gentiles;

<sup>d</sup> Luke 2. 32. Acts 13. 47.

NEW TRANSLATION

6. "I, JEHOVAH, have called thee in righteousness,  
 "And I will hold thee by thy hand, and will preserve thee,  
 "And give thee for a covenant to the people,  
 "A light to the Gentiles.

butes; by showing that he is the Creator and Lord of all things. The object of his dwelling on this, seems to have been, to show that he had power to sustain the Messiah in the work to which he had called him; that he had a right to expect obedience of those to whom he had sent him; and to secure for him respect as having been commissioned by him who had formed the heavens and the earth, and who ruled over all. He shows that he had power to accomplish all that he had promised; and he seeks thus to elevate and confirm the hopes of the people with the assurance of their deliverance and salvation. ¶ *He that created the heavens.* He, therefore, that has all power and all dominion; the living God, the creator of all things. ¶ *And stretched them out.* The heavens are often represented as stretched out as a veil (Gen. 1. 6, Heb.), or as an expanse that can be rolled up (Note, Isa. xxxiv 4), or as a tent for the appropriate dwelling-place of God (Note, ch. xl. 22). His great power and glory are indicated by the fact that he has stretched out what to us appears a vast expanse over our heads. On the grammatical construction of the word which occurs here in the Heb., see Rosenmüller in loco. ¶ *He spread forth the earth.* He expanded it; he stretched it out as a plain—retaining the idea which was so common among the ancients that the earth was a vast plain, reaching from one end of the heavens to the other. The words, however, which are here used, are not inconsistent with the idea that the earth is a sphere, since it may still be represented as stretched out, or expanded to a vast extent. The main idea in the passage

is, not to teach the *form* in which the earth is made, but to show that it has been made by God. ¶ *And that which cometh out of it.* The productions of the earth—the trees, shrubs, grain, &c., everything which the earth produces. As the verb to *stretch out* cannot be applied to these, some verb must be understood; as he *produced*, or *caused to grow*. ¶ *He that giveth breath.* He who is the source of life to all. ¶ *And spirit to them, &c.* This refers, doubtless, to beasts as well as to men; and the idea is, that God is the source of life to all the creatures that live and move on the earth. The idea in the passage is, that as God is the creator and upholder of all; as he has given life to all, and has the universe entirely under his control, he has a right to appoint whom he will to be the medium of his favors to men; and to demand that suitable respect shall be shown to the Messiah whom he has designated for this work. The Great God, the creator and upholder of all things, has appointed him (ver. 6) to this work, and all should regard him as sent by JEHOVAH, and as having a claim to the homage and obedience of men.

6. *I the LORD have called thee in righteousness.* The phrase, "in righteousness," has been very differently understood by different expositors. See Note, ch. xli. 10. The most probable meaning may be, "I have done it as a righteous and just God. I have done it in the accomplishment of my righteous purposes. I am the just moral governor of the universe; and to accomplish my purposes of justice and fidelity, I have designated thee to this work." The work which he undertook was in the

7. To open the blind eyes, to prison, *and* them that sit in darkness <sup>c</sup> the prisoners from the <sup>f</sup> out of the prison house.

ε 2 Tim. 2. 26.

ζ 1 Pet. 2. 9.

#### NEW TRANSLATION

7. "To open the eyes of the blind :

"To lead out the prisoner from the prison,

"And those that sit in darkness from the prison-house."

establishment and for the purposes of righteousness; and he came to accomplish that. Lowth has well rendered it, "for a righteous purpose." In this work *all* was righteousness. God was righteous, who appointed him; it was *because* he was righteous, and could not save without a mediator and an atonement, that he sent him into the world; he selected one who was eminently righteous to accomplish his purpose; and he came that he might establish righteousness in the earth, and maintain the honor of law, and confirm the just government of God. See ver. 21. ¶ *And will hold thine hand.* I will take thee by the hand, as one does who guides and leads another. The phrase denotes the same as to guard, or keep—as we protect and guard a child by taking him by the hand. ¶ *And give thee for a covenant.* This is evidently an abbreviated form of expression, and the meaning is, "I will give or appoint thee as the medium, or means by which a covenant shall be made with the people; or a mediator of the new covenant which God is about to establish with men." See ch. xlix. 8. The new covenant should be ratified through him. A similar expression occurs in Micah v. 5, where it is said of the Messiah, "and this [man] shall be in peace;" that is, he shall be the source of peace, or the means of procuring peace; peace shall be established and maintained by him. So in Eph. ii. 14, it is said of him, "and he is our peace." ¶ *Of the people.* It has been doubted whether this means the Jewish people, or the Gentiles. Grotius, Hengstenberg, Vitringa, and others understand it of the Jews; Rosenmüller, and others, of the Gentiles. It is not easy to determine which is the correct interpretation. But the meaning, as I

apprehend, is, not that he should confirm the ancient covenant with the descendants of Abraham, as Hengstenberg and Vitringa suppose, but that his covenant should be established with *ALL*, with both Jews and Gentiles. According to this it will refer to the Jews, not *as* the Jews, or as already interested in the covenant, but as constituting one portion of the world; and the whole expression will mean, that his religion will be extended to Jews and Gentiles; i. e., to the whole world. ¶ *For a light of the Gentiles.* See Luke ii. 32. *Light* is the emblem of knowledge, instruction, and of the true religion. The Messiah is often called "light," and the "light of the world." See Matt. iv. 16. Comp. Note, Isa. ix. 2; John i. 4, 7, 9; iii. 19; viii. 12; ix. 5; xii. 35, 46; Rev. xxi. 23. This is one of the numerous declarations which occur in Isaiah, that the religion of the Messiah would be extended to the heathen world; and that they, as well as the Jews, would be brought to partake of its privileges.

7. *To open the blind eyes.* To give light to those that are in spiritual darkness. This is equivalent to his saying that he would impart instruction to those who were ignorant. It relates to the Jews as well as to the Gentiles. He would acquaint them with God, with their true condition, and with the knowledge of the way of salvation. The condition of the world is often represented as one of darkness and blindness. Men see not their true character; they see not their real condition; they are ignorant of God, and of the truths pertaining to their future existence; and they need, therefore, some one who shall enlighten, and sanctify, and save them. ¶ *To bring out the prisoners from the prison.* Comp. ch. lxi. 1, 2. This

8. I *am* the LORD: <sup>g</sup> that is my name: and <sup>h</sup> my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

<sup>g</sup> Ps. 83. 18.

<sup>h</sup> ch. 48. 11.

9. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before <sup>i</sup> they spring forth I tell you of them.

<sup>i</sup> Acts 15. 18.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

8. "I am JEHOVAH; that is my name;  
 "And my glory will I not give to another;  
 "Nor my praise to graven images.  
 9. "The former things, Behold! they are come to pass,  
 "And new things do I declare.  
 "Before they spring forth, I cause you to hear them."

evidently refers to a spiritual deliverance, though the language is derived from deliverance from a prison. It denotes that he would rescue those who were fettered, bound, and confined in mental darkness by sin; and that their deliverance from the thralldom and darkness of sin would be as wonderful as if a prisoner should be delivered suddenly from a dark cell, and find his chains suddenly fall off, and be permitted to go forth, and breathe the pure air of freedom. Such is the freedom which the gospel imparts; nor can there be a more striking description of its happy effects on the minds and hearts of darkened and wretched men. Comp. 1 Pet. ii. 9.

8. *I am the LORD. I am JEHOVAH.* Here is also a change in the address. In the previous verses, God had addressed the Messiah. Here he turns to the people, and assures them that he is the only true God, and that he claims homage as the only true God, and that he will not suffer the praise that is due to him to be given to any other, or to any graven image. The name JEHOVAH signifies being, or essential existence. See Note, ch. i. 9. It is a name which is given to none but the true God, and which is everywhere in the Scriptures appropriated to him alone, and used to distinguish him from all others. ¶ *That is my name.* That is my appropriate name; the name which I have chosen by which to distinguish myself from all idols, and which I regard as appropriately expressive of my exist-

ence and perfections. Thus it is used in Ps. lxxxiii. 18. Comp. Ps. xcvi. 5. ¶ *And my glory.* The glory, honor, or praise that is due to me. ¶ *Will I not give.* I will not allow it to be ascribed to another, I will not allow another to assume or receive the honor which is due to me. ¶ *To another.* To any other—whether it be man, or whether it be an idol. God claims that all appropriate honours should be rendered to him: and that men should cherish no opinions, maintain no doctrines, indulge in no feelings, that would be derogatory to the honor of his name. He claims that he should be acknowledged as the only true God, and be recognised in all his agency, and his appropriate works. This declaration is designed to counteract the propensity everywhere manifest to attribute to man that which belongs to God, or to ascribe to our own wisdom, skill, or power, that which he alone can accomplish. ¶ *Neither my praise.* The praise which is due to me. He would not permit graven images to receive the praise of having done that which he himself had accomplished. He had a right to the homage and adoration of all men.

9. *Behold, the former things are come to pass.* That is, the former things which he had foretold. This is the evidence to which he appeals in proof that he alone was God; and this is the basis on which he calls upon them to believe that what he had predicted in regard to future things would also



10. Sing unto the LORD a new <sup>k</sup> the sea, and <sup>l</sup> all that is therein; song, and his praise from the end the isles, and the inhabitants of the earth, ye that go down to thereof.

<sup>k</sup> Rev. 5. 2.

<sup>l</sup> the fulness thereof.

NEW TRANSLATION.

10. Sing to JEHOVAH a new song,  
His praise from the end of the earth,  
Ye that go down to the sea and all that fill it;  
The islands, and they that dwell therein.

come to pass. He had by his prophets foretold events which had now been fulfilled, and this should lead them to confide in him alone as the true God. He had now predicted future events, and men should learn from the fulfilment of the former predictions to believe that those also would be certainly and entirely fulfilled. ¶ *And new things do I declare.* Things pertaining to future events; things relating to the coming of the Messiah, and to the universal prevalence of his religion in the world. ¶ *Before they spring forth.* Before they occur. But there is here a beautiful image. The metaphor is taken from plants and flowers, the word *צמח*, *Tzámáhh*, properly referring to the sprouting, or springing up of plants, or to their sending out shoots, buds, or flowers. The phrase literally means, "before they begin to germinate," i. e., before there are any indications of life, or growth in the plant. And the sense is, that God predicted the future events before there were any indications that they should occur; before there was anything by which it might be inferred that such occurrences would take place. It was not done by mere sagacity—as men like Burke and Canning may sometimes predict future events with great probability by marking certain indications or developments. See Burke on the French Revolution. God did this when there were no such indications, and when it must have been done by mere omniscience. In this respect, all God's predictions differ from the conjectures of man, and all the reasonings which are founded on mere sagacity.

10. Sing unto the LORD a new song.

It is common, as we have seen, to celebrate the goodness of God in a song or hymn of praise on the manifestation of any peculiar act of mercy. See Notes on ch. xii., xxv., xxvi. Here the prophet calls upon all people to celebrate the divine mercy in a song of praise in view of his goodness in providing a Redeemer. He had shown that God would raise up such a Redeemer; that his religion would be extended to all nations; and in view of that he calls on all to acknowledge the goodness and mercy of God. The sentiment is, that God's goodness in providing a Saviour demands the thanksgiving of all the world. ¶ *A new song.* A song hitherto unsung; one that shall be expressive of the goodness of God in this new manifestation of his mercy. None of the hymns of praise that had been employed to express his former acts of goodness would appropriately express this. The mercy was so great that it demanded a song expressly made for the occasion. ¶ *And his praise from the end of the earth.* From all parts of the earth. Let the most distant nations, who are to be interested in this great and glorious plan, join in the glad celebration. On the meaning of the phrase, "end of the earth," see Note, ch. xl. 28. ¶ *Ye that go down to the sea.* That is, traders, navigators, merchants, seamen, such as do business in the great waters. The sense is, that they would be interested in the plan of mercy through a Redeemer; and hence they are called on to celebrate the goodness of God. Thus in ch. lx. 5, Isaiah says, "the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee," meaning that the time would come when the multitude of those that

11. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up *their voice*, the villages *that* Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

11. Let the desert and the cities thereof lift up [their voice];  
The villages which Kedar doth inhabit;  
Let the inhabitants of the rock sing,  
Let them shout from the top of the mountains.

pass their lives upon the waters would be converted to the Messiah, and be employed in conveying the knowledge of the true religion around the world. This is referred to by the prophet, because (1) of the great multitude who thus go down to the sea; and (2) because their conversion will have so important an influence in diffusing the true religion to distant nations. ¶ *And all that is therein.* Marg., as in Heb., "the fulness thereof." All that fill it; that is, either in ships, or by dwelling on the islands and coasts. The meaning is, that all who were upon the sea—the completeness, the wholeness of the maritime population being equally interested with all others in the great salvation, should join in celebrating the goodness of God. ¶ *The isles, &c.* All that dwell in the sea. A large portion of the inhabitants of the world are dwellers upon islands. In modern times, some of the most signal displays of the divine mercy, and some of the most remarkable conversions to Christianity, have been there. In the Sandwich Islands, in the South Sea Islands, and in Ceylon, God has poured out his Spirit; and the inhabitants have been among the first in the heathen world to embrace the gospel.

11. *Let the wilderness.* The desert, Note, ch. xxxv. 1. The word here denotes the most uncultivated countries, intimating that even the most rude and barbarous people would have occasion to rejoice, and would be interested in the mercy of God. ¶ *And the cities thereof.* To us there seems to be something incongruous in speaking of a "wilderness," and of the "cities" in it. But we are to remember that the Hebrews

gave the name wilderness, or desert, to those regions that were mostly uncultivated, or thinly inhabited, though there were in those places, villages or cities. They were regions that were chiefly devoted to pasturage, and not cultivated by the plough; or regions of vast plains of sand and far-extended barrenness, with here and there an *oasis* on which a city might be built. Josephus, speaking of the desert or wilderness lying between Jerusalem and Jericho, enumerates several villages or towns in it, showing that though it was mainly a waste, yet that it was not wholly without towns or inhabitants. We are to remember, also, that large towns or cities for commercial purposes, or thoroughfares, were often built in the few fertile or advantageous places which were found in the midst of vast desert wastes. Thus we are told of Solomon, (2 Chron. viii. 4,) that "he built Tadmor in the wilderness;" and we know that Palmyra, and Bozrah, and Sela, were large cities that were built in the midst of regions that were generally to be regarded as deserts, or wastes. ¶ *The villages.* The scattered villages of Arabia. Most of the Arabs dwell in tents, and frequently remove from one place to another. But there are many of them who dwell in villages. Even in Arabia Deserta, there were many such villages. ¶ *Kedar doth inhabit.* Where the inhabitants of Kedar dwell. Kedar was a son of Ishmael, (Gen. xxv. 13,) the father of the Kedarrenians, or Cedrei, mentioned by Pliny (N. H. v. 2), who dwell in the vicinity of the Nabathæans in Arabia Deserta. They often change their place, though it would seem that they usually dwell

12. Let <sup>1</sup> them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.

13. The LORD shall go forth as

<sup>1</sup> Ps. 117. 1.

a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a <sup>m</sup> man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he <sup>1</sup> shall prevail against his enemies.

<sup>m</sup> Ex. 15. 3. <sup>1</sup> or, *behave himself mightily.*

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

12. Let them ascribe glory to JEHOVAH,  
And proclaim his praise in distant lands!

13. JEHOVAH shall march forth like a hero;  
Like a man of war shall he rouse his vengeance;  
He shall cry aloud; he shall raise the war-cry;  
He shall prevail against his enemies!

on the neighbourhood of Petra, or Sela. The name Kedar is often given to Arabia Deserta, and the word may, in some instances, denote Arabia in general. The inhabitants of those countries usually dwell in tents, and lead a romantic and wandering life. ¶ *Let the inhabitants of the rock sing.* It is uncertain whether the word "rock" here (Heb., סֵלָא, *Sēlā*, Gr., πέτρα, Petra, or Rock), is to be regarded as a proper name, or to denote, in a general sense, those who dwell in the rocky part of Arabia, or Arabia Petraea. Sela, or Petra, was the name of the celebrated city that was the capital of Idumea. (See Notes in ch. xvi. 1.) and the connexion here would rather lead us to suppose that this city was intended here, and that the inhabitants of the capital were called upon to join with the dwellers in the surrounding cities and villages in celebrating the goodness of God. But it may denote in general those who dwell in the fastnesses of the rocks; those who inhabited the desolate and stony region of Arabia Petraea, or whose home was among the cliffs of the rocks. If so, it is a call upon Arabia in general to rejoice in the mercy of God, and to give glory to him for providing a plan of redemption—an intimation that to the descendants of Ishmael, the Nomade tribes of the desert, the wandering hordes of Arabia, the blessings of the gospel shall be extended. ¶ *Let them shout from the top of the mountains.* Those who dwell on the top of the mountains. They

who had taken refuge there, or who had made their permanent abode there. Vittinga supposes that the mountains of Paran are meant, which are situated on the north of mount Sinai. The idea in the verse is, that all the dwellers in Arabia should celebrate the goodness of God, and join in praising him for his mercy in giving a deliverer. They were yet to partake of the benefits of his coming, and to have occasion of joy at his advent. It is possible that Cowper may have had this passage in his eye in the following beautiful description of the final and universal prevalence of the gospel:

"The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks,  
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops,  
From distant mountains catch the flying joy;  
Till nation after nation taught the strain,  
Earth rolls the rapturous hosannas round."

TASK.

12. *Let them give glory.* Let them praise JEHOVAH. ¶ *In the islands.* Note, ch. xli. 1. Let the distant regions praise God.

13. *The LORD shall go forth.* This and the following verses give the reasons why they should praise JEHOVAH. He would go forth in his might to overcome and subdue his foes, and to deliver his people. He would appear as a warrior and a conqueror, and his enemies should be subdued at his feet. In his conquests, and in the establishment of his kingdom, all people would have occasion to rejoice and be glad. ¶ *As a mighty man.* As a hero, as a warrior. JEHOVAH is often in the

14. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, *and* refrained myself: *now* <sup>a</sup> will I cry like a travelling woman; I will destroy and <sup>1</sup> devour at once.

<sup>a</sup> Job 32. 18—20.

<sup>1</sup> swallow, or, sup up.

15. I will make waste mountains <sup>o</sup> and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools.

<sup>o</sup> ch. 49. 11.

#### NEW TRANSLATION,

14. I have long held my peace;  
I have been still, and refrained myself  
But now will I cry like a woman in travail;  
I will breathe hard and pant at the same time [in my anger].  
15. And I will make desolate the mountains and the hills,  
And dry up all their herbs;  
And I will make the rivers dry lands;  
And I will dry up the pools.

Scriptures represented as a hero, or a man of war :

JEHOVAH is a man of war ;

JEHOVAH is his name. Ex. xv. 3.

Who is this king of glory ?

JEHOVAH, strong and mighty

JEHOVAH mighty in battle. Ps. xxiv. 8.

Comp. Ps. xlv. 3 ; Isa. xxvii. 1, xxx. 30. ¶ *He shall stir up jealousy.* He shall rouse his vengeance, or his indignation. The word, <sup>q</sup>gānāh, means vengeance, or indignation, as well as jealousy. The image here is that of a warrior who is excited against his foes, and who rushes on impetuously for his overthrow, or to take vengeance on them. ¶ *He shall cry.* He shall give a shout, or a loud clamor. Warriors usually entered a battle with a loud shout, designed to stimulate their own courage, and to intimidate their foes. All this language is taken from such an entrance on an engagement, and denotes the fixed determination of God to overthrow all his enemies.

14. *I have long time holden my peace.* I have been silent. I have not gone forth to battle against my foes. This is the language of JEHOVAH, and it means that he had for a long time been patient and forbearing; but that now he would go forth to overpower and destroy his foes. ¶ *I will destroy.* The word here used (from <sup>n</sup>nāshām, *Nāshām*) denotes, properly, to breathe hard, to pant,

as a woman in travail; and then to breathe hard in any manner. It here denotes the hard breathing which is indicative of anger, or a purpose to execute vengeance. ¶ *And devour at once.* Marg., "Swallow, or sup up." The word, <sup>h</sup>shānāph, means, rather, to breathe hard, to pant, to blow, as in anger, or in the haste of pursuit. The idea in the verse is, that JEHOVAH had for a long time restrained his anger against his foes, and had refrained from executing vengeance on them. But now he would rouse his righteous indignation, and go forth to accomplish his purposes in their destruction. All this language is applicable to a hero, or warrior; and is, of course, not to be regarded as applicable literally to God. He often speaks in the language of men; and speaks of his purposes under the image of human passions. But we are not to infer that the language is literally applicable to him, nor is it to be interpreted too strictly. It means, in general, that God would go forth with a fixed and settled purpose to destroy his foes, and that he would no longer spare them.

15. *I will make waste mountains.* This verse denotes the utter desolation which God would bring upon his foes in his anger. He would prostrate and destroy all before him. The meaning of this part of the verse is, that he

16. And <sup>p</sup> I will bring the blind <sup>q</sup> by a way *that* they knew not; I will lead them in paths <sup>r</sup> *that* they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things <sup>s</sup> straight. These things will I do <sup>t</sup> unto them, and not <sup>u</sup> forsake them.

<sup>p</sup> Hos. 2. 14.

<sup>r</sup> Hos. 2. 6.

<sup>q</sup> Eph. 5. 8.

<sup>s</sup> Ezek. 14. 23.

<sup>t</sup> Heb. 13. 8.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

16. And I will lead the blind in a way which they have not known;  
And through paths which they have not known will I direct them;  
I will make darkness light before them,  
And crooked things straight.

would spread desolation over the hills and mountains that were fertile, and that were well watered and laid out in gardens and orchards. It was common to plant vineyards on the sides of hills and mountains; and, indeed, most of the mountains of Palestine and adjacent regions were cultivated nearly to the top. They were favorable to the culture of the vine and the olive; and by making terraces, the greater portion of the hills were thus rescued for purposes of agriculture. Yet an enemy or warrior marching through a land would seek to spread desolation through all its cultivated parts, and lay waste all its fields. God, therefore, represents himself as a hero and a conqueror, laying waste the cultivated portions of the country of his foes. All the resources of his enemies should be destroyed. ¶ *And dry up all their herbs.* All that is produced on the cultivated hills. He would destroy all the grain and fruits on which they were depending for support, and would spread utter desolation everywhere. ¶ *And I will make the rivers islands.* Or rather, dry land, or deserts. I will, in the heat of my anger, dry up the streams, so that the bottoms of those streams shall be dry land. The word here rendered *islands*, from נִי, נִי, properly denotes dry land, habitable ground, as opposed to water, the sea, rivers, &c., and the signification *islands* is a secondary signification. ¶ *And I will dry up the pools.* The pools on which they have been dependent for water for their flocks,

herds, &c. The sense of the whole passage is, I will bring to desolation those who worship idols, and the idols themselves. I will produce an entire change among them, *as great* as if I were to spread desolation over their cultivated hills, and to dry up all their streams. The reference is, probably, to the great changes which God would make in the heathen world. Everything then should be changed. All that flourished on pagan ground; all that was nurtured by idolatry; all their temples, fanes, altars, shrines, should be overturned and demolished, and in all these things, great and permanent changes should be produced. The time would have come when God could no longer bear with the growing abominations of the pagan nations, and when he would go forth as a conqueror to subdue all to himself.

16. *And I will bring the blind.* Having said, in the previous verses, what he would do to his enemies, God now speaks of his people. He would be their protector. He would lead and guide them. He would deliver them from their foes; and would conduct them to their own land—as a people blind that needed a guide, and would remove whatever obstacles there were in their way. By the “blind” here, he refers doubtless to his own people. The term is applied originally here to his people in captivity, as being ignorant of the way in which they could be delivered, and as being ignorant, after their seventy years’ exile, of the way of

17. They \* shall be turned back, | that trust in graven images, that  
they shall be greatly ashamed, | say to the molten images, Ye are  
our gods.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

17. They shall be turned back, they shall be put to shame,  
Who trust in graven images;  
Who say to molten images,  
“Ye are our gods.”

return to their own land. It is *possible* that it may have a reference to the fact, so often charged on them, that they were characteristically a stupid and spiritually blind people. But it is more probable that it is the language of *tenderness* rather than that of oburgation; and denotes their ignorance of the way of return and their need of a guide, rather than their guilt and hardness of heart. If applied to the people of God under the New Testament—as the entire strain of the prophecy seems to lead us to conclude—then it denotes that Christians feel their need of a leader, counsellor, and guide; and that JEHOVAH as a hero, or a military leader, would conduct them all in a way which they did not know, and would remove all obstacles from their path. ¶ *By a way that they knew not.* When they were ignorant what course to take; or in a path which they did not contemplate or design. It is true of all the friends of God that they are ignorant, until he teaches them, of the way in which they should go, and it is true of all Christians also, that *they have been led in a way which they knew not.* They did not mark out this course for themselves; they did not at first form the plans of life which they came ultimately to pursue; they have been led, by the providence of God, in a different path, and by the spirit of God they have been inclined to a course which they themselves would never have chosen. Comp. Note, ch. xxx. 21. ¶ *I will make darkness light before them.* Darkness, in the Scriptures, is the emblem of ignorance, sin, adversity, and calamity. Here it seems to be the emblem of adverse and opposing events, of cala-

mities, persecutions, and trials. And the meaning is, that God would make those events, which seemed to be adverse and calamitous, the means of furthering his cause, and promoting the spirit of the true religion, and the happiness of his people. This has been eminently the case with the persecutions which the church has endured; and it has been true that the events which have been apparently most adverse, and full of darkness, have been ultimately overruled to the best interests of the true religion. Such was the case with the persecutions under the Roman emperors; and, in general, such has been the case in all the persecutions which the church has been called to suffer. ¶ *And crooked things straight.* Things which seem to be adverse and opposing—the persecutions and trials which the people of God would be called to endure. ¶ *And not forsake them.* See Notes, ch. xli. 10, 13, 14.

17. *They shall be turned back.* The phrases to be turned back, and to be suffused with shame, are frequently used in the Scriptures to denote a state of conscious guilt, or a state of disappointment in regard to an object of trust or confidence, and especially of those who had trusted in idols. See Ps. xxxv. 4, lxx. 3; xcvi. 7. Comp. Notes, Isa. i. 29; xix. 9; xxxvii. 27. See also Ezek. xvi. 52, 54, 63. The sense here is, that they should find no such protection in their idol gods as they had hoped; that they should see that they were unable to defend them; and that they should be covered with conscious guilt for ever having trusted in them, and given to them the homage which was due to the true God.

18. Hear, <sup>x</sup> ye deaf; and look, ye <sup>y</sup> blind, that ye may see.  
 19. Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD's servant?  
 a ch. 6. 10. y John 9. 39.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

18. O ye deaf, hear!  
 And ye blind, look attentively!  
 19. Who is blind if not my servant?  
 And deaf as my messenger whom I sent?  
 Who so blind as he that is perfectly instructed!  
 So blind as the servant of JEHOVAH!

18. *Hear, ye deaf.* This is evidently an address to the Jews, and probably to the Jews of the time of the prophet. He had been predicting the coming of the Messiah, and the influence of his religion on the Gentile world. He had said that God would go forth to destroy the idolatry of the heathen nations, and to convince them of the folly of the worship of images, and to confound them for putting their trust in them. The prophet seems here to have recollected that this was the easily-besetting sin of his own countrymen, and, perhaps, especially of the times when he penned this portion of the prophecy—under the reign of Manasseh; that that generation was stupid, blind, deaf to the calls of God, and sunk in the deepest debasement of idolatry. In view of this, and of the great truths which he had uttered, and of their guilt and obligations, he calls on them to hear, to arouse, to be alarmed, to return to God, and assures them that for these sins they exposed themselves to, and must experience, his sore displeasure. The statement of these truths, and the denouncing of these judgments, occupy the remainder of this chapter. A similar instance occurs in ch. ii., where the prophet having foretold the coming of the Messiah, and the fact that his religion would be extended among the Gentiles, turns and reproves the Jews for their idolatry and crimes. See Notes on that chapter. The Jewish people are often described as “deaf” to the voice of God, and “blind” to their duty and their interests. See Isa. xxix. 18;

xlii. 7. ¶ *And look—that ye may see.* This phrase denotes an attentive, careful, and anxious looking or search, in order that there may be a clear view of the object. The prophet calls them to a careful and attentive contemplation of the object, that they might have a clear and distinct view of it. They had hitherto looked at the subject of religion in a careless, inattentive, and thoughtless manner.

19. *Who is blind, but my servant?* Some of the Jewish expositors suppose that by “servant” here, the prophet himself is intended, who they suppose is here called blind and deaf by the impious Jews who refused to hear him, and who rejected him and his message. But it is evident, that by “servant” here, the Jewish people are intended, the singular being used for the plural, in a sense similar to that where the Jews are so often called “Jacob” and “Israel.” The phrase, “servants of God,” is often given to his people, and is used to denote true worshippers. The word is here used to denote those who *professed* to be the true worshippers of JEHOVAH. The prophet had, in the previous verses, spoken of the blindness and stupidity of the Gentile world. He here turns to his own countrymen, and addresses them as more blind, and deaf, and stupid. “Who,” he asks, “is as blind as they are? Where are any of the heathen nations so insensible to the appeals of God, so hard-hearted, so sunk in sin?”—The idea of the prophet is, that the Jews had had far greater advantages; they had been more highly

20. Seeing many things, but | thou observest not; opening the  
ears, but he heareth not.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

20. Seeing many things, but thou regardest them not;  
Having the ears open, but thou dost not hear!

favored; and yet they were sunk in sin, and in the deep debasement and degradation of idolatry. So deeply sunk were they, and such was their guilt, that it might be said that comparatively none were blind but they. Even the degradation of the heathen nations, under the circumstances of the case, could not be compared with theirs. ¶ *As my messenger that I sent?* Lowth renders this, "And deaf, as he to whom I have sent my messengers." The LXX render it, "And deaf but those that rule over them;" by a slight change in the Hebrew text. The Vulgate reads it as Lowth has rendered it. The Chaldee renders it, "If the wicked are converted, shall they not be called my servants? And the sinners to whom I sent my prophets?" But the sense seems to be this:—The Jewish people were regarded as a people selected and preserved by God, for the purpose of keeping and extending the true religion. They might be spoken of as a messenger sent for this purpose—the great purpose of enlightening the world—as God's messenger in the midst of the deep darkness of benighted nations, and as appointed to be the agents by which the true religion was to be perpetuated and propagated on earth. Or perhaps, the word "messenger" here may denote collectively the Jewish leaders, teachers, and priests, who had been sent as the messengers of God to that people, and who were, with the people, sunk in deep debasement and sin. ¶ *As he that is perfect.* חָשֵׁם, *hinschullām*. A great variety of interpretations has been offered on this word—arising from the difficulty of giving the appellation "perfect," to a people so corrupt as were the Jews in the time of Isaiah. Jerome renders it, "qui venundatus est"—he that is sold. The Syriac ren-

ders it, "Who is blind as the prince?" Symmachus renders it, ὡς ὁ πέλεις; and Kiuchi, in a similar manner, by טָמִים, *tāmim*, perfect. The word, טָמִים, *shālām*, means, properly, to be whole, sound, safe; to be completed, finished, ended; and then to be at peace or friendship with any one. And it may be applied to the Jews, to whom it undoubtedly refers here, in one of the following senses; either (1) *ironically*, as claiming to be perfect; or (2) as those who *professed* to be perfect; or (3) as being favored by God with institutions and ordinances that were perfect—with rites, and laws, and a civil and sacred constitution that were complete,—*Vitrunga*; or (4) as being in *friendship* with God, as Grotius and Gesenius suppose. It most probably refers to the fact that they were richly endowed by JEHOVAH with all that was necessary to make them perfect; with such complete and happy institutions as were adapted to their entire welfare, such as in comparison with other nations were fitted to make them perfect. ¶ *As the Lord's servant.* The Jewish people professing to serve and obey God.

20. *Seeing many things.* That is, the people, the Jews, spoken of here as the servants of God. They had had an opportunity of observing many things pertaining to the law, the government, and the dealings of JEHOVAH. They had often witnessed his interposition in the days of calamity, and he often rescued them from peril. These things they could not but have observed, much as they had chosen to disregard the lessons which they were calculated to convey. ¶ *But thou observest not.* Thou dost not keep them (שָׁמַר, *tishmôr*); thou dost not regard them. ¶ *Opening the ears.* Thou hast thine ears open. They heard the words of the law, and



21. The LORD is well pleased will magnify <sup>a</sup> the law, and make  
for <sup>z</sup> his righteousness' sake; he <sup>1</sup> it honourable.

<sup>z</sup> Ps. 71. 16, 19. Rom. 10. 3, 4. Philip. 3. 9.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 5. 17.

<sup>1</sup> or, *him*.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

21 JEHOVAH was well pleased [with him] on account of his own  
righteousness;  
He hath exalted his own law, and made it glorious.

the instructions conveyed by tradition from their fathers, but they did not lay them to heart, or give heed to them. See Note on ch. vi. 10.

21. *The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake.* There is great variety in the translation and interpretation of this verse. Lowth renders it—

Yet JEHOVAH was gracious unto him for his truth's sake;

He hath exalted his own praise, and made it glorious.

Noyes renders it,

It pleased JEHOVAH for his goodness' sake

To give him a law great and glorious;

And yet it is a robbed and plundered people, &c.

The LXX render it, "The Lord God determined that he should be justified, and magnify his praise." The Chaldee renders it, "JEHOVAH willed that Israel should be justified, he magnified the doers of his law, and comforted them." The Syriac, "The Lord willed on account of his righteousness to magnify his law, and to commend it." Vitringa explains it, "God has embraced the Jewish people in his love and favor, and regards them as acceptable to himself, not indeed on account of any merit of theirs, or on account of any external advantages, but on account of his own truth, fidelity, and equity, that he might fulfil the promises which he made to their fathers." This seems to express the sense of the passage. According to this, it refers solely to the Jewish people, and not, as is often supposed, to the Messiah. The phrase, "is well pleased," means that JEHOVAH takes delight in his people; he looks upon them with a favorable regard, and with an eye of tenderness and affection. He finds pleasure in contemplating them as his people, and in regarding and trust-

ing them as such. ¶ *For his righteousness' sake.* Not for the righteousness of his people, but on account of his own righteousness, i. e., his own goodness, clemency, mercy, and forbearance. It is not because he sees in them anything that should win his love, or excite his favor—for he says (ver. 22), that they are robbed, and plundered, and hid, and bound in prison. But JEHOVAH had selected their fathers as his own people. He had made them precious promises. He had designs of mercy towards them. He had given them a holy law. He had promised to be their protector and their God. On this account, he was pleased with them still; and it was on account of his own fidelity and plighted protection, that he was delighted in them as his people. The word "righteousness," therefore, צְדָקָה, *tzédhēq*, is used to denote God's purpose to do right; i. e., to adhere to his promises, and to maintain a character of fidelity and integrity. He would not fail, or violate his own pledges to his people. ¶ *He will magnify the law.* The word *law* here is used to denote the entire series of statutes, or legislative acts of God, in regard to the Jewish people—including all his promises and pledges to them. And the meaning is, that he would so deal with them as to make that law important in their view; so as to elevate it, and exalt it into importance; so as to show that he regarded it as of infinite moment. He would adhere strictly himself to all his own covenant pledges in that law, so as to show that he regarded it as sacred and of binding obligation; and all his dealings with them under that law would be such as to magnify its importance and purity in their view. The Hebrew is, "he will

22. But this ~~is~~ a people robbed in prison houses; they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a<sup>a</sup> spoiled; <sup>b</sup> they<sup>1</sup> are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid spoil, and none saith, Restore.

<sup>b</sup> ch. 18. 2.

<sup>1</sup> or, in snaring all the young men of them.

<sup>a</sup> treading.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

22. But this is a robbed and plundered people;  
All of them snared in caverns,  
And secreted in prisons;  
They are for a prey, and there is no one to deliver;  
For a spoil, and no one says, "Restore."

make the law great," that is, he will make it of great importance. ¶ *And make it honorable.* Or make it glorious, by himself showing a constant regard for it, and by so dealing with them that they should be brought to see and feel its importance. According to this, which is the obvious interpretation, the passage has no reference particularly to the Messiah. It *is* true, however, that the *language* here used is such as would appropriately describe the work of the Redeemer; and that a large part of what he did in his public ministry, and by his atonement, was "to magnify the law and make it honorable;"—to vindicate its equity—to show its binding obligation—to sustain its claims—to show that it could not be violated with impunity—to demonstrate that its penalty was just, at the same time that he released men from its penalty by giving himself a sacrifice in their stead. The whole effect of the Redeemer's work is to do honour to the law of God; nor has anything occurred in the history of our world that has done so much to maintain its authority and binding obligation, as his death on the cross in the place of sinners.

22. But this is a people robbed and spoiled. The Jewish people, though highly favored, have been so unmindful of the goodness of God to them, and of their obligations, that he has given them into the hand of their enemies to plunder them. This is to be conceived to be spoken after the captivity, and while the Jews were in exile. Their being robbed and spoiled, therefore, refers to

the invasion of the Chaldeans, and is to be regarded as spoken prophetically of the exiled and oppressed Jews, while in Babylon. ¶ They are all of them snared in holes. This passage has been very variously rendered. See Rosenmüller. Lowth renders it,

"All their chosen youth are taken in the toils;"

following in this the translation of Jerome, and rendering it as Le Clerc and Houbigant render it. The LXX read it, "And I saw, and the people were plundered and scattered, and the snare was in all their private chambers, and in their houses where they hid themselves,"—meaning, evidently, that they had been taken by their invaders from the places where they had secreted themselves in their own city and country. The Chaldee renders it, "All their youth were covered with confusion, and shut up in prison." The Syriac, "All their youth are snared, and they have hid them bound in their houses." This variety of interpretation has arisen in part, because the Hebrew which is rendered in our version, "in holes," בְּחֻרִים, *bāhūrīm*, may be either the plural form of the word בָּחֹר, *bāhūr* chosen, selected; and thence youths—selected for their beauty or strength; or it may be the plural form of the word חֹר, a hole, or cavern, with the preposition בְּ *Beth* prefixed. Our translation prefers the latter; and this is probably the correct interpretation, as the parallel expression, "they are hid

23. Who among you will give ear to this? *who* will hearken and hear for <sup>1</sup> the time to come?

24. Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he <sup>c</sup> against whom

<sup>1</sup> after time.

c Judg. 2. 14. Neh. 9. 26, 27.

we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law.

25. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire <sup>d</sup> round about,

d Deut. 32. 22.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

23. Who among you will give ear to this?

Who will listen and attend for the time to come?

24. Who hath given Jacob for a spoil?

And Israel to the plunderers?

Is it not JEHOVAH against whom we have sinned?

In whose ways they would not walk?

And whose law they would not obey?

25. Therefore he poured out upon them the fury of his wrath,

And the violence of war;

in prison-houses," seems to demand this. The literal interpretation of the passage is, therefore, "a snare, or the snare in the caverns, or holes;" that is, they were snared, or secured in the caverns, holes, or places of refuge where they sought security. They found no safety there, but were taken by their foes and made captive; or, they were obliged to resort to caverns and places of obscure retreat for safety, and were there confined, so that they did not dare to go out, *as if* a snare, net, or gin had been thrown over the mouth of the cavern to take them. ¶ *And they are hid in prison houses.* They were concealed in their houses as in prisons, so that they could not go out with safety, or without exposing themselves to the danger of being taken captive. The land was filled with their enemies, and they were obliged to conceal themselves, if possible, from their foes. ¶ *And none saith, Restore.* There is no deliverer—no one who can interpose, and compel the foe to give up his captives. The sense is, the Jewish people were so feeble, and so much the object of contempt, that there was no one who could rescue them, or who would feel so much interest in them as to demand them from their foes.

23. Who among you will give ear to

this? Who is there in the nation that will be so admonished by these events; so warned by the judgments of God, that he will attend to the lessons which God designs to teach, and reform his life, and return to God? It is implied by these questions that such *ought* to be the effect; perhaps also it is implied that they were so sunken and abandoned that they *would* not do it. These judgments were a loud call on the nation to reform, and turn to God; and in time to come, to avoid the sins which had made it necessary for him to interpose in this manner, and give them to spoil.

24. *Who gave Jacob for a spoil, &c.* Who gave up the Jewish people to be plundered? Who gave their land to be wasted in this manner? The object of this verse is, to bring distinctly before them the fact that it was JEHOVAH, the God of their fathers, and of their nation, who had brought this calamity upon them. It was not the work of chance, it was not because their enemies were mighty; but it was the immediate and direct act of God on account of their sins. Probably, as a people, they were not disposed to believe this; and the prophet, therefore, takes occasion to call their attention particularly to this fact.

25. *Therefore he hath poured upon him.* God had poured upon the Jewish

yet <sup>e</sup> he knew not; and it burned | him, yet he laid it not to heart.

<sup>e</sup> Hos. 7. 9.

NEW TRANSLATION.

It kindled a flame round about him, yet he did not regard it;  
And it set him on fire, but he did not lay it to heart.

people. ¶ *The fury of his anger.* His righteous indignation in the overturning of their nation, the destruction of their temple and city, and in carrying them captive into a distant land. ¶ *And it hath set him on fire.* That is, the fury of JEHOVAH, and the strength of war, kindled a flame all around the Jewish nation, and spread desolation everywhere. ¶ *Yet he knew not.* They did not regard or consider it. They refused to attend to it, and to lay it to heart. They pursued their ways of wickedness, regardless of the threatening judgments, and the impending wrath of God. They did not consider that these evils were inflicted for their crimes; nor did they turn from their sins when they were thus threatened with the wrath of God.

CHAPTER XLIII.

ANALYSIS.

This chapter is evidently a continuation of the subject discussed in the previous chapters, and refers mainly to the promised temporal deliverance from Babylon. The people of God are still contemplated by the prophet as suffering the evils of their long and painful captivity; and his object is to comfort them with the assurances of deliverance. The chapter may be regarded as composed of a *succession of arguments*, or striking considerations, all tending to show them that God would be their protector, and that their deliverance would be certain. These arguments are not distinguished by any very clear marks of transition, and all divisions of the chapter must be in a measure arbitrary. But perhaps the following arrangement will comprise the considerations which the prophet designed to suggest.

I. In the previous chapter he had severely rebuked the Jews for their

sins, as being deaf and blind, and had showed them that it was on account of their sins that these calamities had come upon them. Yet he now turns and says, that they are his people; the people whom he has redeemed, and whom it was his purpose to deliver; and presents the solemn assurance that they should be rescued, vs. 1—7. This assurance consists of many *items* or considerations, showing that they should be recovered, however far they were driven from their own land. (a) God has formed and redeemed them, ver. 1. It followed from this, that a God of covenant faithfulness would be with them in their trials, ver. 2. (b) They had been so precious to him and valuable that he had given entire nations for their ransom, ver. 3. It followed from this, that he would continue to give more, if necessary, for their ransom, ver. 4. (c) It was the fixed purpose of God to gather them again wherever they might be scattered, and they had, therefore, nothing to fear, vs. 5—7.

II. God asserts his power over idols, and his superiority to all idol gods. He makes a solemn appeal, as he had done in ch. xli., to show that the idols had no power; and refers to all that he had predicted, and to its fulfillments, in proof that he was the only true God, and had been faithful to his people, ver. 8—13. In doing this, he says, (a) that none of the idols had been able to predict future events, vs. 8, 9; (b) that the Jewish people were his witnesses that he was the true God, and the only Saviour, vs. 10, 11, 12; (c) that he had existed for ever, and that none could thwart his designs, ver. 13.

III. God asserts his power to overcome all their foes, however mighty, and his purpose to destroy the power of Babylon, vs. 14, 17. He says, (a) that he had sent to Babylon [by Cyrus] to bring down their power, and prostrate

## CHAPTER XLIII.

1. But <sup>a</sup> now thus saith the  
LORD that created thee, O Jacob,  
<sup>a</sup> Jer. 33. 24, 26.

and he that formed thee, O Israel,  
Fear not: for I have redeemed  
thee, I have called *thee* by thy  
name; thou *art* mine.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

1. But now thus saith JEHOVAH,  
Who created thee, O Jacob,  
And who formed thee, O Israel;  
Fear not, for I have redeemed thee;  
I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine.

their nobles, vs. 14, 15; and (*b*) appeals to what he had formerly done; refers to the deliverance from Egypt; and asserts it to be his characteristic that he made a way in the sea, and led forth the chariot, the horse, the army, and the power, vs. 16, 17.

IV. Yet he tells them (vs. 18—21), that all his former wonderful interpositions should be surpassed; that he would do a new thing—so strange, so wonderful, and marvellous, that all that he had formerly done should be forgotten. (*a*) They are commanded not to remember the former things, ver. 18. (*b*) He would do a new thing—a thing which in all his former interpositions had not been done, ver. 19. (*c*) The characteristics of the future wonder would be, that he would make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, ver. 19; and that even the wild beasts of the desert should be made to honor him, ver. 20. (*c*) He had formed that people for himself, and they should show forth his praise, ver. 21.

V. From these promises of protection and assistance, and these assurances of favor, God turns to remind them of their sins, and assures them that it was by no merit of theirs that he would thus interpose to deliver them. He shows them that it was on account of their sins that their sanctuary had been desolate; but that he would, notwithstanding, blot out all their sins, and save them, vs. 22—28. He reminds them (*a*) of their having neglected as a people to honor him, and having withheld what was his due, vs. 22—24; yet (*b*) he would blot out their sins, but

it was by no merit of theirs, but by his mere mercy, vs. 25, 26; (*c*) they had been a sinful people, and he had, therefore, humbled their power, and given the nation to reproach and a curse, vs. 27, 28. The same subject is resumed and prosecuted in the next chapter, and they should be read together without any interruption.

1. *But now.* This expression shows that this chapter is connected with the preceding. The sense is, "Though God has punished the nation, and showed them his displeasure (ch. xlii. 24, 25), yet *now* he will have mercy, and will deliver them." ¶ *That created thee.* The word "thee" is here used evidently in a collective sense as denoting the Jewish people, or the chosen people of God. It is used because the names, "Jacob" and "Israel," in the singular number, are applied to the people. Jacob, or Israel was chosen by God, in preference to Esau, as his friend (Mal. i. 2, 3; Rom. ix. 13); and the name is often applied to the Jews as their peculiar appellation. The word "created" is here used to denote the idea that as the peculiar people of God, they owed their origin to him as the universe owed its origin to his creative power. It does not mean that as a people they had been formed in the same mode in which the universe was created; nor that there was any creative energy employed in forming them to be his people; but it means that as a people they were *originated* by him; their institutions, their laws, and customs, and privileges, and what-

2. When <sup>b</sup> thou passest through | the waters, <sup>c</sup> I will be with thee;

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 66. 12.

<sup>c</sup> Acts 27. 20, 25.

NEW TRANSLATION.

2. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee;  
And through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee;

ever they had that was valuable, were all to be traced to him. The same word occurs in ver. 7, and again in ver. 15. "I am JEHOVAH—the Creator of Israel, your King." See also ch. xlv. 1. Comp. Ps. c. 3. ¶ *And he that formed thee.* That formed thee as a people; originating thy laws and institutions, and constituting the nation as it is. ¶ *Fear not.* This is to be understood as addressed to them when suffering the evils of the captivity of Babylon. Though they were captives, and had suffered long, yet they had nothing to fear in regard to their final extinction as a people. They should be redeemed from captivity, and restored again to the land of their fathers. The argument here is, that they were the chosen people of God; that he had organized them as his people for great and important purposes, and that those purposes must be accomplished. It would follow from that, that they must be redeemed from their captivity, and be restored again to their land. ¶ *For I have redeemed thee.* The word *בָּרָא*, *gā'āl*, means, properly, to redeem, to ransom by means of a price, or a valuable consideration, as of captives taken in war; or to redeem a farm that was sold, by paying back the price. It is sometimes used, however, to denote deliverance from danger or bondage, without specifying any price that was paid as a ransom. Thus the deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage is redemption.

Ex. vi. 6; xv. 13. Comp. Gen. xlviii. 16; Isa. xxix. 22; xlv. 23; Jer. xxxi. 11. See Note, ch. i. 27. It is not improbable, however, that wherever *redemption* is spoken of in the Scriptures, even in the most general manner, and as denoting deliverance from danger, oppression, or captivity, there is still retained the idea of a ransom in some form; a price paid; a valuable

consideration; or *something that was given in the place of that which was redeemed*, and which answered the purpose of a price, or a valuable consideration, or a public reason of the deliverance. Thus in regard to the deliverance from Egypt. Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba are mentioned as the ransom (see Note on ver. 3); and so in the deliverance from Babylon, Babylon was given in the place of the ransomed captives; or was destroyed in order that they might be redeemed. God destroyed Babylon in order to vindicate or redeem them. So in all nations of redemption; as, *e. g.* God destroyed the life of the great Redeemer, or caused him to be put to death, in order that his chosen people might be saved. ¶ *I have called thee by thy name.* I have designated thee as my people. To call by name denotes intimate affection, or the intimacy of friendship. Here it means that God had *particularly* designated them to be his people. His call had not been general, addressed to the nations at large, but had been addressed to them in particular. Comp. Ex. xxxi. 2, where God says that he had designated "by name" Bezalcel to the work of constructing the tabernacle. ¶ *Thou art mine.* Thou art my people. They were his, because he had formed them as a people, and had originated their institutions; because he had redeemed them; and because he had particularly designated them as his. The same thing may be said of his church now; and for the same reason, and in a still more important sense, that church is his. He has organized it; he has appointed its peculiar institutions; he has redeemed it with precious blood; and he has called his people by name, and designated them as his own.

2. When thou passest through the waters. This is a general promise, and

and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the <sup>d</sup> fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

<sup>d</sup> Dan. 3. 25, 27.

3. For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave <sup>e</sup> Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

<sup>e</sup> Prov. 21. 18.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned;  
Neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

3. For I am JEHOVAH, thy God;  
The Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour;  
I gave Egypt for thy ransom,  
Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

means that whenever, and wherever they should pass through water or fire he would protect them. It had been true in their past history as a people; and the assurance is here given in order that they might be comforted in view of the calamities which they were then suffering in Babylon. Fire and water are often used in the Scriptures to denote calamity—the latter because it overwhelms, the former because it consumes. Water in particular is often used to denote calamity. See Ps. lxi. 1. “The waters are come into my soul.” Ps. lxxiii. 10; cxxiv. 4, 5. So fire and water are united to express calamity. Ps. lxvi. 12. “We went through fire and through water.” ¶ *I will be with thee.* I will protect thee. Comp. Note, ch. xli. 10. ¶ *And through the rivers.* Also expressive of calamity and danger—like attempting to ford deep and rapid streams. ¶ *They shall not overflow thee.* As was the case with the Jordan when they crossed it under the guidance of Joshua, and its waters were divided, and a pathway was made for the armies of Israel. ¶ *When thou walkest through the fire, &c.* This is expressive of calamity and danger in general, like passing through fire. Yet it had a literal fulfilment in the case of the three pious Jews who were cast by Nebuchadnezzar into the burning furnace. Dan. iii. 25, 27. ¶ *Neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* It shall not only not consume thee, but it shall not even burn or in-

jure thee. See Dan. iii. 27. You shall be completely protected. The Chaldee refers this verse to the passage through the Red Sea, and to the protection which God gave his people there. In the Chaldee paraphrase, it is rendered, “In the beginning, when you passed through the Red Sea, my word was your aid. Pharaoh and Egypt, who were mighty like the waters of a river, were not able to prevail against you. And when thou didst go among a people who were formidable like fire, they could not prevail against you, and the kingdoms which were strong like flame could not consume you.” It is, however, to be understood rather as a promise pertaining to the future; though the language is mainly derived, undoubtedly from God’s protecting them in their perils in former times.

3. *For I am the LORD thy God.* This verse continues the statement of the reasons why he would protect them. He was JEHOVAH, *their* God. He was not only the true God, but he was *their* God; the God whom they had worshipped; the God who had entered into solemn covenant with them, and who would therefore protect and defend them. ¶ *The Holy One of Israel.* The holy God adored by Israel, and their God and Friend. It was one of his characteristics that he was the God of Israel. Other nations worshipped other gods. He was *THE* God of Israel; and as it was presumed that a God would protect his own people, so he bound himself to

protect and deliver them. ¶ *Thy Saviour.* This was another characteristic. He *had* saved them in days of peril; and he had assumed to them the relation of a Saviour; and he would maintain that character. ¶ *I gave Egypt for ransom.* This is a very important passage in regard to the meaning of the word *ransom*, as well as in regard to the correct interpretation. The word נָתַתִּי, *nāthatti*, "I gave," is rendered by Gesenius (Comm. in loc.) and by Noyes, in the future, "I will give." Gesenius supposes that it refers to the fact that the countries specified *would* be made desolate in order to effect the deliverance of the Jews, or that such would be the result of their deliverance. He observes that although Cyrus did not conquer and desolate them, yet that it was done by his successors. In particular, he refers to the fact that Cambyzes invaded and subdued Egypt (Herod. iii. 15); and that he then entered into, and subdued Ethiopia and Meroë, (Strabo xvii., Joseph. Ant. ii. 10. 2.) But the word properly refers to the past time; and the scope of the passage requires us to understand it of past events. For God is giving a *reason* why his people might expect protection, and the reason here is, that he *had* been their protector and deliverer, and that his purpose to protect them was so fixed and determined, that he had even brought ruin on nations more mighty and numerous than themselves in order to effect their deliverance. The *argument* is, that *if* he had suffered Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba, to be desolated and ruined *instead of them*, or in order to effect their deliverance, they had nothing to fear from Babylon, or any other hostile nation, but that he would effect their deliverance even at the expense of the overthrow of the most mighty kingdoms. The word rendered "ransom" here is קָפָה, *kōphēr*. It is derived from קָפַח, *kāphār*, (whence the Latin *cooprio*, the Italian *coprire*, the French *couvrir*, the Norman *coverer*, and *couverer*, and the English *cover*), and means literally to cover; to cover over; to overlay with anything, as pitch, as in Gen. vi. 14.

Hence, to cover over sins; to overlook; to forgive; and hence, to make an expiation for sins, or to atone for transgression so that it may be forgiven. Ps. lxxv. 4; lxxviii. 38; Jer. xviii. 25; Dan. ix. 24; Ezek. xlv. 20; Lev. v. 16; Ex. xxx. 15; Lev. iv. 20; xvi. 6; xvi. 24; Gen. xxxii. 21; Prov. xvi. 14. The noun, קֶפֶז, means (1) a village, or hamlet, as being a *cover* or shelter to the inhabitants, 1 Sam. vi. 18. Comp. the word קָפַח, *kāphār*, in Cant. vii. 11; 1 Chron. xxvii. 25; Neh. vi. 2; (2) *pitch*, as a material for overlaying, Gen. vi. 14; (3) the cyprus-flower, the *alhenna* of the Arabs, so called because the powder of the leaves was used to *cover over* or besmear the nails, in order to produce the reddish color which Oriental females regarded as an ornament. *Simonis.* Cant. i. 14; iv. 13. *Margin.* (4) A *ransom*, a price of redemption; or an expiation, so called because by it sins were covered over, concealed, or removed. Ex. xxix. 36; xxx. 10, 16. In such an expiation, that which was offered as the ransom was supposed to take the place of that for which the expiation was made, and this idea is distinctly retained in the versions of this passage. Thus the LXX, ἐποίησα ἀλλαγμὰ σου Αἰγυπτῶν κ. τ. λ. "I made Egypt, &c., thy ἀλλαγμὰ, &c.," a commutation for thee; a change for thee, "I put it in thy place, and it was destroyed instead of thee." So the Chaldee, "I gave the Egyptians as a commutation for thee."

הלחלפֿהֿכֿח. So the Syriac, "I gave Egypt in thy place."

The true interpretation, therefore, is, that Egypt was regarded as having been given up to desolation and destruction *instead of* the Israelites. One of them must perish; and God chose that Egypt, though so much more mighty and powerful, should be destroyed, rather than his people, and should be destroyed *in order* to deliver his people. They took their place, and were destroyed *instead of* the Hebrews, in order that they might be delivered from the bondage under which they groaned. This



4. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy <sup>1</sup> life.

<sup>1</sup> or, person.

NEW TRANSLATION.

4. Because thou art precious in my sight,  
Because thou art honored, and I love thee;

may be used as a striking illustration of the atonement made for sin, when the Lord Jesus, the expiatory offering, was made to suffer in the stead—*ἀλλagma*—of his people, and in order that sinners might live. And if God's giving up the Egyptians to destruction—themselves so guilty and deserving of death—in order to save his people, was a proof of his love for them, how much greater is the demonstration of his love when he gives his own holy Son to the bitter pains of death on a cross in order that his church may be redeemed. There has been much variety, as has already been intimated, in the interpretation of this, and in regard to the time and events referred to. It has, by many, been supposed to refer to the invasion by Sennacherib, who, when he was about to fall upon Jerusalem, turned his arms against the Egyptians, and their allies, and when Jerusalem was thus saved by devoting those nations to desolation. Vitranga explains it of Shalmaneser's design upon the kingdom of Judea, after he had destroyed that of Samaria, from which he was diverted by carrying the war against the Egyptians, Cushians, and Sabeans. But of this, Lowth says, there is no clear proof in history. Secker supposes that it refers to the fact that Cyrus overcame those nations, and that they were given him for releasing the Jews. Lowth says, "Perhaps it may mean, generally, that God had often saved his people at the expense of other nations, whom he had, as it were, in their stead given up to destruction." Perhaps the exact historical facts in the case cannot be clearly made out; nor is it to be wondered at, that many things of this nation, says Lowth, should remain obscure for want of the light of history, which in regard to those times is extremely deficient.

In regard to Egypt, however, I think the case is clear. Nothing, it seems to me, is more manifest than that the prophet refers to that great and wonderful fact—the common-place illustration of the sacred writers, that the Egyptians were destroyed in order to effect the deliverance of the Jews, and that they were thus given as a ransom for them. The historical facts in regard to the other places mentioned, are not so apparent. ¶ *Ethiopia*. Heb., *Cush*. In regard to this country, see Note, Isa. xviii. 1. It is not improbable that the prophet here refers to the facts referred to in that chapter, and the destruction which it is there said would come upon that land. See the Notes on that chapter. ¶ *And Seba*. This was the name of a people descended from Cush, Gen. x. 7; and hence the name of the country which they occupied. According to Josephus, Ant. II. 10, 2, it seems to have been *Meroë*, a province of Ethiopia, distinguished for its wealth and commerce, surrounded by the two arms or branches of the Nile. There still remain the ruins of a metropolis of the same name, not far from the town of Shandy. Keppel's Travels in Nubia and Arabia, 1829. *Meroë* is a great island or peninsula in the north of Ethiopia, and is formed by the Nile, and the Astaboras, which unites with the Nile. It was a city and a land of priests. It was probably anciently called *Seba*, and was conquered by Cambyeses, the successor of Cyrus, and by him called *Meroë*, after his sister. That it was near to Ethiopia is apparent from the fact that it is mentioned in connexion with it. Comp. Ps. lxxii. 10; Isa. xlv. 14; Herod. iii. 20. They would naturally ally themselves to the Ethiopians, and share the same fate.

4. Since thou wast precious in my sight,

5. Fear not: for I *am* with thee from the east, and gather thee from the west: I will bring thy seed from the west;

## NEW TRANSLATION.

Therefore will I give men instead of thee,  
And people instead of thy life.

5. Fear not, for I am with thee:  
I will bring thy children from the East,  
And from the West I will gather thee together.

This verse contains another reason why God would be their protector, and would defend and deliver them. That reason was, that he had loved them as his people; and he was willing, therefore, that other people should be overcome in order that they might be saved. They were his chosen people; to them he had committed his oracles, and the true religion; with them also were his precious promises; and through them the world was to be blessed with the knowledge of the true religion; and they were, therefore, precious, or of value in his sight. ¶ *Thou hast been honourable.* This does not refer so much to their personal character, as to the fact that they had been honoured by him with being the depository of the precious truths of his religion. *He* had made them honourable by the favours bestowed on them, not that they were honourable in reference to their own personal character and worth. ¶ *Therefore will I give men for thee.* As in the case of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba, ver. 3. He would cause other nations to be destroyed, if it were necessary, in order to effect their deliverance, and to restore them to their own land. As his people, they were of more value than other nations, and he would suffer Cyrus to overturn the Babylonian empire, suffer armies to be discomfited and fall, in order that they might be delivered. We learn here, (1) that nations and armies are in the hand of God, and at his disposal; (2) that his people are dear to his heart, and that it is his purpose to defend them; (3) that the revolutions among nations, the rise of one empire, and the fall of another, are often in order to promote the welfare of his

church, to defend it in danger, and deliver it in time of calamity; and (4) that his people should put the utmost confidence in God, as being able to defend them, and as having formed a purpose to preserve and save them. Expressions similar to those used in this verse occur frequently among the Arabians. See Rosenmüller *in loco*. ¶ *For thy life.* Marg., *person*. The Heb. is, for thy soul, that is, on account of thee, or in thy place. See Notes on ver. 3.

5. *Fear not.* Note, ch. xli. 10, 14. Comp. ch. xliii. 1. ¶ *For I am with thee.* As thy protector. If God is with us we have nothing to fear. Comp. Rom. viii. 31. ¶ *I will bring thy seed.* Thy children, thy descendants. The sense is, I will re-collect my scattered people from all parts of the world. This passage appears to have been taken from Deut. xxx. 3, where God promises to gather his people together again if they should be disobedient and scattered among the nations, and should then repent. It is in accordance with the promises so often made, and so wonderfully verified, that God would preserve them as a distinct and separate people, would keep them from mingling with the surrounding nations, and would again re-gather them to their own land. Vitringa understands this of the *spiritual* descendants of the Jews, or of those who should believe on the Messiah among the Gentiles, and who should become the people of God. But the more natural interpretation is, to refer it to the Jews who were scattered abroad during the exile at Babylon, and as a promise to re-collect them again in their own land. ¶ *From the*

6. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring <sup>f</sup> my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

7. *Even every one that is called*

<sup>g</sup> by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made <sup>h</sup> him.

8. Bring forth the blind <sup>i</sup> people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.

*f* ch. 18. 7.

*g* James 2. 7.

*h* Eph. 2. 10.  
*i* Ezek. 12. 2.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

6. I will say to the North, "Give them up;"  
And to the South, "Withhold them not;"  
"Bring my sons from afar,  
"And my daughters from the ends of the earth;"
7. "Every one that is called by my name;  
"And that I have created for my glory,  
"Whom I have formed; yea, whom I have made."
8. Bring forth the people, blind, although they have eyes;  
And deaf, although they have ears.

*east, &c.* From all parts of the earth; from all lands where they were scattered. That they were driven to other places than Babylon on the invasion of their land by the Chaldeans, is abundantly manifest in the historical records. Ezek. v. 12; xvii. 21; Jer. ix. 16; Zech. ii. 6; Amos ix. 9.

6. *I will say to the north.* To the regions or countries in the North where my people are scattered. ¶ *Give up.* Give up my people, or restore them to their own land. ¶ *Bring my sons, &c.* Bring all my people from the distant lands where they have been driven in their dispersion. They shall be again restored to their own country and home. This is a beautiful passage. As if all lands were under the control of God, and he could at once command, and they would obey, he calls on them to yield up his people to their own country. He issues a commandment which is heard in all quarters of the globe, and that commandment is obeyed, and the scattered people of God came flocking again to their own land.

7. *Every one that is called by my name.* To be called by the name of any one is synonymous with being regarded as his son, since the son bears the name of his father. See ch. xlii. 5; xlviii. 1. The expression, therefore, means here,

all who were regarded as the children of God; and the promise is, that all such should be re-gathered to their own land. ¶ *For I have created him* Note on ver. 1. ¶ *For my glory.* In order to show forth and illustrate my glory. They shall be, therefore, defended and protected; and my glory shall be shown in their recovery and salvation.

8. *Bring forth the blind people.* Many have understood this of the Jews. So Vitringa, Rosenmüller, Grotius, and others understand it. But Lowth more correctly understands it as referring to the Gentiles. It is designed as an argument to show the superiority of God over all idols, and to demonstrate that he was able to deliver his people from captivity and exile. He appeals, therefore, (ver. 9,) to the witness of his own people to his divinity and power. None of the heathen (ver. 8) had been able to predict future events, none of the heathen gods, therefore, could save; but JEHOVAH, the experience of whose interposition had been so manifest to his people, who had so often foretold events that were fulfilled, *was* able to deliver, and of that fact his own people had had abundant evidence. ¶ *That have eyes.* They had natural faculties to see and know God, (Comp. Rom. i. 20,) but they had not improved them, and they

9. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, *It is truth.*

10. Ye <sup>k</sup> *are* my witnesses; saith the LORD, and my servant <sup>l</sup> whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me <sup>m</sup> there was <sup>l</sup> no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

<sup>k</sup> ch. 44. 8.

<sup>l</sup> Phil. 2. 7.

<sup>m</sup> Col. 1. 17.

<sup>l</sup> or, *nothing formed of God.*

#### NEW TRANSLATION

9. Let all the nations be gathered together  
And let the people be assembled!  
Who among them hath declared this,  
And will cause us to hear those things which shall first come to pass?  
Let them produce their witnesses, and show that they are true;  
And let them hear, and say, "It is true."  
10. Ye are my witnesses, saith JEHOVAH;  
Even my servant whom I have chosen;  
That ye may know and confide in me,  
And understand that I am He.  
Before me no God was formed;  
And after me, there shall be none.

had. therefore, run into the sin and folly of idolatry. The phrase, "bring forth," implies a solemn appeal made by God to them to enter into an argument on the subject. Comp. Note, ch. xli. 1

9. *Let all the nations, &c.* Let them be assembled for the purpose of argument, to give evidence, or to adduce proofs that their idols are worthy of confidence, ch. xli. 1. ¶ *Who among them, &c.* Who among them *hath* predicted this state of things? Who has foretold the events which are now occurring? It is implied here that JEHOVAH *had* done this, but none of the heathen gods had done it. Note, ch. xli. 21. ¶ *And shew us former things?* Note, ch. xli. 22. The order of events, the manner in which one event shall succeed another. Not merely, who can declare *one single event*, but who can declare the *succession*, the order in which many events shall follow each other—a far more difficult thing than to declare one single future event. Neither had been done by the heathen; both had been done by God. ¶ *That they may be*

*justified.* That it may be demonstrated that they are what they pretend to be, and that they are worthy of the confidence of men. The word "justified," here, is used in the sense of being *right*, or *true*; let them in this manner show that their claims are just, and well founded. ¶ *Or let them hear, and say, It is truth.* See Note on ch. xli. 26.

10. *Ye are my witnesses, &c.* You who are my people, my chosen. They were his witnesses, because (1) he had given to them predictions of future events which had been literally fulfilled; (2) by his power of delivering them so often manifested, he had shown that he was a God able to save. Neither of these had been done by the idol gods. Comp. ch. xli. 8. ¶ *And believe me, Or rather "confide in me."* ¶ *Before me, &c.* I am the only true God; the eternal God. In this expression, JEHOVAH says that he was the *first* being. He derived his existence from no one. He depended on none. He was original, and he was therefore independent. Perhaps the Hebrew will bear a little

11. I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; saved, and I have shewed, when and beside me *there is* no <sup>a</sup> Saviour. *there was* no strange god among you: therefore ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I *am* God.

12. I have declared, and have

<sup>a</sup> Hos. 13. 4. Acts 4. 12.

#### TRANSLATION.

11. I, I am JEHOVAH;

And beside me there is no Saviour.

12. I have declared, and have saved,

And I have made known when there was no strange god among you;

And ye are my witnesses, saith JEHOVAH;

And I am God.

more emphasis than is conveyed by our translation. "Before me, God was not formed;" implying that *he* was God, and that *he* existed anterior to all other beings. It is known that it was an opinion among the Greeks, that the same gods had not always reigned, but that the more ancient divinities had been expelled by the more modern. It is possible that some such opinion may have prevailed in the oriental idolatry, and that God here means to say, in opposition to that, that he had not *succeeded* any other God in his kingdom. His dominion was original, underived, and independent. ¶ *Neither shall there be after me.* He would exist for ever. He would never cease to live. He would never vacate his throne for another. This expression is equivalent to that which occurs in the Book of Revelation, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," (Rev. i. 11;) and it is remarkable that this language, which obviously implies eternity, and which in Isaiah is used expressly to prove the divinity of JEHOVAH, is, in the passage referred to in the Book of Revelation, applied no less unequivocally to the Lord Jesus Christ.

11. *I, even I, am the Lord.* I am JEHOVAH. The repetition of the pronoun "I" makes it emphatic. The design is, to affirm that there was no other being to whom the name "JEHOVAH," the peculiar name of God, appertained. There was no other one who had a right to the name; there was no other one who had the attributes

which the name involved; there was, therefore, no other God. On the meaning of the word JEHOVAH, see Note on ch. i. 9. ¶ *And beside me there is no Saviour.* There is no one who can deliver from oppression, and captivity, and exile, such as the Jews suffered in Babylon; there is no one but he who can save from sin, and from hell. All salvation, therefore, must come from God; and if we obtain deliverance from temporal ills, and from eternal death, we must seek it from Him.

12. *I have declared.* I have announced, or predicted future events; I have warned of danger, I have marked out the path of safety. He had thus shown that he was the true God. See Note, ch. xli. 22, 23. ¶ *And have saved.* I have delivered the nation and people in former times of danger, and have thus shown that I would protect them. ¶ *And have shewed.* Heb., "caused to hear." I have made known future events, and thus showed that I was God. ¶ *When there was no strange god among you.* Before the time when any false God was worshipped; when there was no idol in the nation; and when, therefore, it could not be pretended or supposed that deliverance was to be traced to any one but to JEHOVAH. The word "*god*" here is not in the original, but it is properly supplied. The word גֹּדֵל, *gōdēl*, is evidently used instead of גֹּדֵל, *gōdēl*, as in Ps. xliv. 20; lxxxi. 9. It denotes a *stranger* god; a *foreign* divinity; one that is worshipped

13. Yea, before the day *was* I Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel;  
*am* he; and *there is* none that can For your sake I have sent to Ba-  
 deliver out of my hand: I will bylon, and have brought down all  
 'work, and who ° shall <sup>1</sup> let it? their <sup>2</sup> nobles, and the Chaldeans,

14. Thus saith the LORD, your whose cry *is* in the ships.

° ch. 46. 10.

<sup>1</sup> turn it back ?

<sup>2</sup> bars.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

13. Yea, before time was, I am the same;  
 And there is none that can deliver out of my hand.  
 I work, and who can hinder ?

14. Thus saith JEHOVAH,  
 Your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel ;  
 For your sake I have have sent to Babylon,  
 And brought down all her fugitives,  
 And the Chaldeans—in ships is their shouting.

by foreigners ; that is, those who were not Israelites ; that is, those who were heathens. The sense is, that their former deliverance could in no sense be traced to any such foreign god. ¶ *Therefore ye are my witnesses, &c.* You who have so often been defended ; you who have the predictions respecting future events, can be appealed to as evidence that I am the only true God, able to deliver. The doctrine taught in this passage is, that God may appeal to his dealings with his church and people as a demonstration that he is the true God, and that he is faithful, and able to deliver—an appeal which may be made to his church at large in view of its trials, persecutions, and deliverances, and to every one who is a true friend and worshipper of God.

13. *Yea, before the day was.* Before the first day ; before the beginning of time, from eternity. The word *day* is used here evidently to denote the beginning of time ; and the expression means, “before time was,” or from the beginning of time. The LXX render it correctly ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, and the Vulgate *ab initio*, from the beginning. ¶ *I am he.* I am the same, ver. 10. ¶ *I will work.* I will accomplish my designs. ¶ *And who shall let it ?* Marg., as in the Heb., “turn it back.” The meaning is, “Who can hinder it ?” And the doctrine taught here is, (1) that

God is from everlasting, for if he was before *time*, he must have been eternal. (2) That he is unchangeably the same—a doctrine which is, as it is here designed to be used, the only sure foundation for the security of his people—for who can trust a being who is fickle, changing, vacillating ? (3) That he can deliver his people always, no matter who their enemies are, and no matter what are their circumstances. (4) That he will accomplish all his plans ; no matter whether to save his people, or to destroy his foes. (5) That no one—man or devil—can hinder him. How can the feeble arm of a creature resist God ? (6) That opposition to him is as fruitless as it is wicked. If men wish for happiness, they must *fall in* with his plans, and aid in the furtherance of his designs.

14. *Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer.* This verse commences another argument for the safety of his people. It is the assurance to the Jews in Babylon that he had sent to them a deliverer, and would bring down the pride of the Chaldeans, and demolish their city. ¶ *Your Redeemer.* Note, ver. 1. ¶ *I have sent to Babylon.* That is, the Persians and Medes, under the command of Cyrus. Comp. Note, ch. xiii. 3. This implies that God had command over all their armies, and had the power of sending them where he pleased.

Comp. Notes, ch. x. 5, 6. This is to be understood as seen by the prophet in vision. He sees the armies of Cyrus encompass Babylon and the haughty city fall, and then says that God had sent, or directed them there. ¶ *And have brought down all their nobles.* Marg., "bars." But the word in this place probably means neither, but rather *fugitives*. Comp. Notes on ch. xxvii. 1

The word used, *בָּרִי*, *bārī<sup>h</sup>h*, means sometimes *bar*, *cross-bar*, that which passed from one side of the tabernacle to the other through rings, in order to carry it; then a *bar*, or bolt of any kind. Judg. xvi. 3; Neh. iii. 3. But the word may also denote one who flies; a fugitive; and is properly used in that sense here. The verb *בָּרַח*, from which the word is derived, means often to break away, *to flee*. Gen. xvi. 8, xxxv. 1, 7; Jonah i. 3, Job xxvii. 22; 1 Sam. xix. 12. Here it probably means fugitives, those who endeavored to escape from the impending calamity and destruction. Or it may refer to those who had taken refuge in Babylon from other lands, as Babylon was doubtless composed in part of those who had sought a refuge there from other nations—a conflux of strangers. But the former is the more probable interpretation; and the idea seems to be, that JEHOVAH had brought them down to their ships, or had led them to take refuge in their ships from the impending judgments. Jerome, however, understands it of removing the strong bars with which the prisoners of the exiled Jews were protected, so that they would be permitted to go forth in peace and safety. Lowth renders it, "I will bring down all her strong bars." The LXX render it, "all that fly," *φεύγοντας πάντας*. So the Syriac. ¶ *And the Chaldeans.* The inhabitants of Babylon. ¶ *Whose cry is in the ships.* Lowth renders this, "exulting in their ships." Noyes, "ships of their delight." The Vulgate, "glorying in their ships." The LXX, "The Chaldeans shall be bound (*δεθίσονται*) in ships." The Syriac, "Who glory in their ships." The sense is, probably, that the captive Chaldeans, when their

city was taken, would seek to take refuge in their ships in which they would raise a shout. *Rosenmüller*. Or the sense may be, as Lowth supposes, that it was one of the characteristics of the Chaldeans that they boasted of their ships, and of their commerce. Babylon was, as he remarks, favorably situated to be a commercial and naval power. It was on the large river Euphrates, and hence had access to the Persian Gulf and the ocean, and there can be no doubt that it was engaged, in the height of its power, in commercial enterprises. On the north of the city, the Euphrates was united to the Tigris by the canal called *Nabar Malca*, or the Royal River, and thus a large part of the produce of the northern regions, as far as the Euxine and Caspian seas, naturally descended to Babylon. Herod. i. 194. Semiramis, the founder of Babylon, is said to have had a fleet of three thousand galleys. After the taking of the city by Cyrus, we hear, indeed, little of the commerce of Babylon. The Euphrates was diverted from its course, and spread over the whole country, and the Persian monarchs, in order to prevent the danger of invasion from that quarter, purposely obstructed the navigation, by making dams across both the Tigris and the Euphrates. Strabo L. xvi. It is not to be deemed remarkable, therefore, that in the times of its prosperity, the city of Babylon should be noted for its commerce; or as a city exulting in its shipping, or raising the sailor's cry—a cry such as is heard in any port now where shipping abounds. The word rendered *cry*, *הִנֵּה*, denotes, properly, a shout of rejoicing, or joy. Ps. xxxi. 6; xlii. 5; 1 Kings xxii. 36; and then also a mournful cry, an outcry, wailing. Ps. xvii. 1; lxi. 2. Here it may mean, the joyful cry of commerce; the shout of the sailor as he leaves the port; or the cry of the mariner as he returns to his home—the shout, the clamor, which is heard at the wharfs of a commercial city. Such a cry is alluded to by Virgil in the naval games which Æneas celebrated.

— "ferit æthera clamor  
Nauticus." ÆNEID. v. 141, 142.

15. *I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.*

16. Thus saith the LORD, which  
maketh a way in the sea, and a  
path in the mighty waters;

p Ex. 14. 16, 22. Ps. 77. 19.

NEW TRANSLATION.

15. I am JEHOVAH, your Holy One,  
The Creator of Israel, your king.

16. Thus saith JEHOVAH,  
He that makes a way in the sea,  
And a path in the mighty waters;

17. Who brings forth the chariot, and the horse; the army and the  
power;  
Together they lie down; they rise no more;  
They are extinguished; they are quenched like tow.

The sense here is, that God had sent to bring down that exulting city, and humble it, and destroy all the indications of its commercial importance and prosperity.

15. *I am the LORD.* I am JEHOVAH—proved to be such, as the connexion demands that we should interpret this, by sending to Babylon, and bringing down your oppressors. This interposition in destroying Babylon would be a demonstration that he was JEHOVAH, the only true God, and their God. ¶ *Your Holy One.* The holy God who is peculiarly your protector and friend. ¶ *The Creator of Israel.* Note, ver. 1. ¶ *Your King.* Ruling over you, and shewing the right to do it by delivering you from your foes.

16. *Thus saith the LORD.* This verse contains a reference to the deliverance from Egyptian servitude—the great store-house of argument and illustration with the sacred writers; the standing demonstration of God's merciful interposition in behalf of their nation, and proof that he was their God. ¶ *Which maketh.* Whose characteristic it is to make a way in the sea—to open a path of safety for his people, even when deep and rapid floods of difficulty and danger are before them. The prophet employs the present tense, perhaps, to denote that this was a characteristic, or

17. Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise; they are extinct, they are quenched as tow.

an attribute of God. It was his way, or custom to do this. The standing proof of this, which undoubtedly the prophet had in his eye, was the deliverance from Egypt. Still, I think, he did not mean to refer to that alone, but to that as an illustration of what God was, and had ever been to his people. ¶ *A way in the sea.* Referring to the path made through the waters of the Red Sea when the children of Israel were permitted to go on dry ground.

17. *Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, &c.* The reference here is, undoubtedly, to the occurrences which are recorded in Ex. xiv. 4, seq., when Pharaoh and his host are said to have followed the Israelites, but were all submerged in the sea. God is said to have brought them forth in accordance with the general statement so often made, that he controls and directs princes and nations. See Note, ch. x. 5, 6. ¶ *They shall lie down together.* They shall sink together to death, as Pharaoh and his army sunk together in a watery grave:

Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them:

They sank as lead in the mighty waters.

Ex. xv. 10.

The depths have covered them:

They sank into the bottom as a stone.

Ex. xv. 5.



18. Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

19. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and

rivers in the desert.

20. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the <sup>1</sup> owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen

<sup>1</sup> daughters of the owl, or, ostriches.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

18. Remember not the former things;  
And the things of ancient times regard them not.
19. Lo! I do a new thing;  
Even now shall it spring forth; will ye not regard it?  
Yea, I will make a way in the wilderness;  
Streams in the desert.
20. The beast of the field shall honor me,  
The dragons, and the daughters of the ostrich;  
For I give waters in the wilderness,  
And streams in the desert;  
To give drink to my people, my chosen—

¶ *They are extinct.* They are destroyed, as the wick of a lamp is quenched suddenly when immersed in water. This is a striking figure to denote the suddenness with which it was done, and the completeness of their destruction. As a flame is entirely put out when plunged beneath the water, so the whole host of the Egyptians were suddenly and completely destroyed in the Red Sea. The sentiment in this verse is, that God has power over the nations to control them; that it is one of his characteristics to lead on the enemies of his people to destruction; and that they are suddenly destroyed, and their hopes, and joys, and triumphs put out for ever. If it was so in regard to the Egyptians, it will be also in regard to all the foes of God. And if this took place in regard to a nation, it shall also in regard to individual sinners who oppose themselves to God.

How oft is the candle of the wicked put out?  
And how oft cometh their destruction upon them?

God distributeth sorrows in his anger.

They are as stubble before the wind,  
And as chaff that the storm carrieth away.

Job xxi. 17, 18.

18. Remember ye not, &c. So great and wonderful shall be God's future

interpositions in your behalf, that what he has done, great as that was, shall be comparatively forgotten. That which he was about to do would far surpass what he had done. ¶ *The former things.* The deliverance from Egypt, and the overthrow of his enemies there. ¶ *The things of old.* The things that were formerly done.

19. *I will do a new thing.* Something that has not hitherto occurred, some unheard of and wonderful event, that shall far surpass all that he had formerly done. See Note, ch. xlii. 9. ¶ *Now it shall spring forth.* Note, ch. xlii. 9. It shall spring up as the grass springs up from the earth; or it shall bud forth like the opening leaves and flowers—a beautiful figure, denoting the manner in which the events of divine Providence come to pass. ¶ *I will even make a way in the wilderness, &c.* In this part of the verse, the prophet describes the anxious care which God would shew in protecting his people, and providing for them in conducting them to their native land. See the expressions fully explained in the Notes on ch. xli. 17, 18, 19.

20. *The beast of the field shall honour me.* The wild beasts in general. The

21. This people have I formed for myself; they <sup>a</sup> shall shew forth my praise.

22. But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary <sup>r</sup> of me, O Israel.

<sup>g</sup> Eph. 1. 6, 12.

<sup>r</sup> Mal. 1. 13.

23. Thou hast not brought me the <sup>1</sup> small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to <sup>s</sup> serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.

<sup>1</sup> lambs, or, kids,

<sup>s</sup> Matt. 11. 30.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

21. A people whom I have formed for myself;  
They shall recount my praise.  
22. But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob,  
Thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.  
23. Thou hast not brought to me the lamb of thy burnt-offering;  
And with thy sacrifices thou hast not honored me;  
I have not made a slave of thee in [exacting] an oblation;  
Nor wearied thee with [demanding] incense.

sense of this passage is plain, and the image is highly poetical and beautiful. God would pour such copious floods of waters through the waste sandy deserts, that even the wild beasts would be sensible of his abundant goodness, and would break forth into thanksgiving and praise for the unusual and abundant supply. Not only his people, in travelling through those deserts, would partake, but the beasts of prey that roam the wastes should partake also, and be sensible of the goodness of God. ¶ *The dragons.* See Note, ch. xiii. 22. The LXX render the word here used, τάννιν, *tānnin*, by σειρήνες, *sirens*—among the ancients a marine monster that was fabled to use sweet and alluring tones of music. It is probable, however, that the LXX understood here some species of wild fowl which responded to one another, as owls, &c. The Syriac translator here interprets it as denoting some wild animal of the canine species, a wood-dog. ¶ *And the owls.* Margin, as in the Hebrew, “daughters of the owl or ostrich.” See Note, ch. xiii. 21.

21. *This people have I formed.* Note on ver. 1. I have chosen them, and given them their peculiar institutions. ¶ *For myself.* To preserve the remembrance of my name, and to transmit the knowledge of the true God to future

times, and to celebrate my praise. ¶ *They shall shew forth my praise.* They shall celebrate my goodness; or, by their restoration to their own land, they shall shew manifestly that they are my people.

22. *But thou hast not called upon me, &c.* As a people, they had not worshipped and honored God. The design of this and the following verses is to shew them that they were indebted to the divine mercy and clemency alone for their deliverance from bondage. It was not because they had been either meritorious or faithful; it was not because they had deserved these favors at his hand, for they had been a people that had been rebellious, and distinguished for neglecting their God. On that account, these calamities had come upon them; and their deliverance, therefore, was to be an act of mere unmerited favor. ¶ *Thou hast been weary.* As a people, you have been weary of my service. They had accounted his laws grievous and oppressive, and they had groaned under what they regarded as burdensome rites and ceremonies. See Amos viii. 5, 6; Mal. i. 13. God here refers, doubtless, to the times before the captivity, and is stating what was the general characteristic of the people.

23. *Thou hast not brought me.* As a

24. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou <sup>1</sup> filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast

<sup>1</sup> made me drunk, or, abundantly moistened.

† Mal. 2. 17.

NEW TRANSLATION.

24. Thou hast not purchased for me, with silver, the sweet-smelling calamus:

Neither hast thou satiated me with the fat of thy sacrifices;

But thou hast burdened me with thy sins,

Thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities.

people, you have withheld from me the sacrifices which were commanded. They had not maintained and observed his worship as he had required. ¶ *The small cattle.* Margin, *lambs* or *kids*. The Hebrew word, *שֶׁה*, *sēh*, denotes, properly, one of a flock—a sheep or a goat. It should have been so rendered here. These animals were used commonly for burnt-offerings, and the Jews were required to offer them daily to God. ¶ *Of thy burnt offerings.* For a holocaust, or burnt-offering. Comp. Ex. xxix. 38; Num. xxviii. 3. The burnt-offering was wholly consumed on the altar. ¶ *With thy sacrifices.* Bloody offerings. 'There is little difference between this word and that rendered "burnt-offerings." If there is any difference, it is that the word rendered "sacrifice," *זֶבַח*, *zēbhāh*, is of wider signification, and expresses sacrifice in general; the word rendered "burnt-offering," *עֹלָה*, *ōlāh*, denotes that which is consumed, or which ascends as an offering. The holocaust refers to its being burned; the sacrifice to the offering, however made. ¶ *I have not caused thee to serve with an offering.* I have not succeeded in making thee to serve me; or, I have not burdened thee. Or perhaps, "I have not made a slave of thee;" I have not exacted such a service as would be oppressive and intolerable—such as is imposed on a slave. The word here used, *רָבְחָדָה*, *rābhādāh*, is often used in such a sense, and with such a reference. Lev. xxv. 39. "Thou shalt not compel him to serve the service of a bondman."

Ex. i. 14; Jer. xxii. 13; xxv. 14; xxx. 8. The sense is, that the laws of God on the subject were not grievous and oppressive. ¶ *With an offering.* The word here used, *מִנְחָה*, *mīnhāh*, denotes a gift, a present, a tribute, an offering to God. It denotes, properly, a *bloodless* oblation, and is thus distinguished from those mentioned before. It consisted of flour mingled with salt, oil, and incense; or of the fruits of the earth, &c. See Lev. ii. 2, Num. xxviii. 5. ¶ *Nor wearied thee.* By exacting incense. I have not so exacted it as to make it burdensome and wearisome to you. ¶ *With incense.* See Note, ch. i. 13. The word, *לִבְנָה*, *lebhnāh*, Gr. *λίβανος*, denotes, properly, frankincense, a substance so called from its white color, from *לָבָן*, *lābhān*, to be white. 'It is found in Arabia (Isa. lx. 6; Jer. vi. 20) and in Palestine (Cant. iv. 6, 14); and was obtained by making incisions in the bark of the trees which produced it. It was much used in worship among the Jews, as well as by other nations. It was burned in order to produce an agreeable fragrance. Ex. xxx. 8; xxxvii. 29; Lev. xvi. 13.

24. *Thou hast bought me.* You have not purchased this—implying that it was not produced in Palestine, but was an article of commerce. It was probably to be obtained only from abroad. This is expressly affirmed in Jer. vi. 20. "To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country?" That it was an article of commerce is also apparent from

25. I, *even* I, *am* he that blot- mine own <sup>x</sup> sake, and will not re-  
teth <sup>u</sup> out thy transgressions for member <sup>y</sup> thy sins.

<sup>u</sup> Jer. 50. 20.

<sup>x</sup> Ezek. 36. 22, 32.

<sup>y</sup> Jer. 31. 34.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

25. I, I am He who blotted out thy transgressions for mine own sake,  
And will not remember thy sins.

Ezek. xxvii. 19. "Dan also and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs (i. e., Tyre): bright iron, cassia, and calamus (קָנֶה, *qānē*), were in thy market." ¶ *Sweet cane*. The word here used (קָנֶה, *qānēh*) denotes, properly, *cane*, *reed*, *calamus*, (Gr., *kávva* and *kávvnē*, Latin, *canna*.) It usually refers to a reed growing in wet or marshy ground. It denotes also sweet cane, *calamus aromaticus*. It is sometimes joined with the word בִּסְמָן, *bōsem*, aromatic, odor, fragrance, spice, as in Ex. xxx. 23. See also Jer. vi. 20. According to Pliny (12, 22), it grew in Arabia, Syria, and India; according to Theophrastus, in the vales of Lebanon. His Plant. 9, 7. It was used among the Hebrews in compounding the sacred perfumes. Ex. xxx. 23. It is a knotty root, of a reddish color, and contains a soft white pith—in resemblance, probably, not unlike the calamus so well known in this country. Strabo and Diodorus Siculus say that it grew in Saba. Hasselquist says that it is common in the deserts of the two Arabias. It is gathered near Jambo, a port town of Arabia Petrea, from whence it is brought into Egypt. The Venetians purchase it, and use it in the composition of their theriaca. It is much esteemed among the Arabs on account of its fragrance. See Calmet (art. *cane*), and Gesenius Lex. and Comm. in loco. It was not probably used in the worship of God anywhere except among the Hebrews. The heathens made use of incense, but I do not know that they used the calamus. ¶ *Neither hast thou filled me*, &c. Margin, "Made me drunk, or abundantly moistened." The word here used (רָבָא, *rāvāh*), means, properly, to drink to the full, to be satisfied,

sated with drink. See it explained in the Notes on ch. xxxiv. 6. It is applied to water which is drunk, or to *fat* which is sucked in or drunk, rather than eaten (Ps. xxxvi. 9); or to a sword as drinking up blood. Here it means to satiate or to satisfy. They had not offered the fat of sacrifices so as to satiate God. Probably this passage does not mean that the Jews had wholly neglected the public worship of God, or had withheld from him the form of worship. But it probably means that they had not worshipped him with a proper spirit; they had done it for ostentation and vain glory; they had made it a matter of mere formality, and had thus served him with their sins, and wearied him with their transgressions. It is true, also, that while the Jews were abundant in external rites and ceremonies, they frequently made oblations to idols, rather than to the true God. Perhaps, therefore, an emphasis is to be placed on the word "me" in this passage, meaning, that however diligent and regular they had been in the performance of the external rites and duties of religion, yet that God had been truly neglected. ¶ *Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins*. You have made it oppressive, burdensome, wearisome, for me, like the hard and onerous service of a slave. See Note on ver. 23. Comp. ch. i. 14, Note.

25. I, *even* I, *am* he. This verse contains a gracious assurance that their sins would be blotted out, and the reason why it would be done. It is God alone who does it. The pronoun "I" is repeated to make it emphatic, as in ver. 11. Perhaps also God designs to shew them the evil of the sins which are mentioned in the previous verses, by the assurance that they were committed

26. Put me in remembrance: that thou mayest be <sup>2</sup> justified.  
let us plead together: declare thou,

τ Rom. 8. 33.

NEW TRANSLATION.

26. Put me in remembrance; let us enter into judgment together;  
Declare thou, that thou mayest justify thyself.

against him who alone could forgive, and who had promised them pardon. Sin contains a peculiar aggravation, from the fact that it is committed against a *pardoning* God. The passage also reminds them, that it was God alone who *could* pardon the sins of which, as a nation, they had been guilty. ¶ *That blotteth out thy transgressions.* This metaphor is taken from the custom of keeping accounts, where, when a debt is paid, the charge is blotted or crossed out, or cancelled. Thus God says he blotted out the sins of the Jews. He did not charge them on them. He cancelled them. He forgave them. Of course, when forgiven, punishment could not be exacted, and he would treat them *as* pardoned; i. e., as his friends. ¶ *For mine own sake.* Not for your sake. Not because you deserve it, or have any claim, or that it would not be right to punish you. Not even primarily to promote your happiness and salvation, but for *my* sake. (1.) To shew the benevolence of my character. (2.) To promote my glory by your forgiveness and salvation. (3.) By my mere good will and pleasure. See Ezek. xxxvi. 22. ¶ *And will not remember thy sins.* Will not punish them. They shall be forgiven. Hezekiah (ch. xxxviii. 17) expresses the same idea by saying "thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." We may learn from this verse, (1.) That it is God only who can pardon sin. None but he can blot out transgressions. How vain, then, is it for man to attempt it! How wicked for man to claim the prerogative! And yet it is an essential part of the papal system, that the Pope and his priests have the power of remitting the penalty of transgression. (2.) That this is done by God *solely* for his own sake. It is not (a) because we have any *claim* to it—for then it would not be pardon, but

justice. It is not (b) because we have any power to compel God to forgive—for who can contend with him, and how could mere *power* procure pardon? It is not (c) because we have any *merit*—for *then*, also, it would be justice—and we *have* no merit. Nor is it (d) primarily in order that we may be happy—for our happiness is a trifling matter, is not worthy to be named, compared with the honor of God. But is solely for his own sake—to promote his glory—to shew his perfections—and to evince the greatness of his mercy and compassion—and to shew his boundless and eternal love. (3.) They who *are* pardoned should live to his glory, and not to themselves. For *that* they were forgiven, and it should be the grand purpose of their life so to live as to shew forth the goodness, compassion, and love of that merciful Being who has blotted out their sins. (4.) If men are ever pardoned, they must come to God—to God alone. They must come sensible that they are sinners. They must come not to *justify* themselves, but to confess their crimes. And they must come with a willingness that God should pardon them on just such terms as he pleases; at just such a time as he pleases; and *solely with a view to the promotion of his own glory.* Unless they have this feeling, they never can be forgiven; nor *should* they be forgiven.

26. *Put me in remembrance.* That is, urge all the arguments in your own defence which you can urge. State everything in self-vindication which can be stated. The language here is taken from the practice of courts when a cause is on trial; and God urges them, on *their* side, to urge all in self-defence, or in self-vindication which they can urge. On *his* part, he maintained that they were justly punished; that the princes and rulers of the nation had sinned (ver.

27. Thy first father hath sinned, | and thy teachers <sup>1</sup> have trans-  
<sup>1</sup> *interpreters.* | gressed against me.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

27. Thy chief father hath sinned,  
 And thy public teachers have revolted from me;

27), and that the whole nation had transgressed (vs. 23, 24), and that it was for this that they were justly punished (ver. 28). He here urges them to advance all in self-defence which they could—if they could pretend that He had forgotten anything; that they had merits which he had not considered; or that he had charged them with crime with undue severity, that they should come and remind him of it. ¶ *Let us plead together.* Let us enter into an argument together, or into a trial of the cause. Heb., “Let us be judged together.” See Note, ch. xli. 1. Let us contend together in judgment, or in the trial of the cause. ¶ *Declare thou.* Declare or urge what you have to urge in self-vindication. Bring forth on your side what can be said in your defence. ¶ *That thou mayest be justified.* That you may shew that you are just, or righteous; that you may demonstrate that you are unjustly accused of crime, and punished with undue severity.

27. *Thy first father hath sinned.* This is the argument on the side of God, to shew that they were neither unjustly punished, nor punished with undue severity. The argument is, that their rulers and teachers had been guilty of crime, and that, therefore, God had brought all this vengeance upon the nation. Various interpretations have been given of the phrase, “thy first father.” A slight notice of them will lead to the correct exposition. (1.) Many have supposed that *Adam* is here referred to. Thus Piscator, Calovius, and most of the fathers understand it, and among the Jews, Kinchi. But the objections to this are plain. (a) *Adam* was not peculiarly the first father or ancestor of the Jews, but of the whole human race. He is nowhere mentioned as the ancestor of the Jews peculiarly, but is always referred to as the father

of the whole human family. (b) The Jews never boasted, or gloried in him as their ancestor, or as the founder of their nation, but they always referred to Abraham under this appellation. John viii. 33, 39; Matt. iii. 9. (c) It would have been irrelevant to the design of the prophet to have referred to the sin of Adam in this case. He was vindicating the cause of God—or rather God was vindicating his own cause and conduct in visiting the nation with judgment; in destroying their capital and temple, and in sending them as captives to a distant land. How would it prove that God was right in this, to say that Adam was a transgressor? How would it demonstrate God's justice in these peculiar inflictions of his anger to refer to the apostasy of the ancestor of the whole human race? (2.) Others refer it to Abraham. This was the sentiment of Jerome, and of some others; and by those who maintain this opinion, reference is made to his doubting in regard to the truth of the promise (Gen. xv. 8); or the denial of his wife, and his sin in inducing her to say that she was his sister (Gen. xii. 11; xx. 2); or because he was, when young, an idolater. But the obvious objection to this is, that Abraham is everywhere in the Scriptures proposed as an example of piety, and as one eminently devoted to God; nor could it be said that these calamities had come upon them in consequence of his unfaithfulness, and his sins. (3.) Others refer it to the rulers and princes of the people individually. Thus Grotius refers it to Manasseh; Aben Ezra to Jeroboam, &c. (4.) Others, as Vitringa, refer it to the High Priest, and particularly to Uriah, who lived in the time of Abaz, and particularly to the fact, that in obedience to the command of Abaz, he constructed an altar in Jerusalem like the one which he had

28. Therefore I have profaned have given Jacob to the curse,  
the <sup>1</sup>princes of the sanctuary, and and Israel to reproaches.

<sup>1</sup> or, *holy princes.*

NEW TRANSLATION.

28. Therefore have I profaned the princes of the sanctuary,  
And I have given up Jacob as a devoted thing,  
And Israel to reproaches.

seen and admired in Damascus. 2 Kings xvi. 10 — 16. The objection to this interpretation is, that no reason can be given for selecting *this* particular act from a number of similar abominations on the part of the Priests and Rulers, as the cause of the national calamities. It was only one instance out of many of the crimes which brought the national judgments upon them. (5.) Others, as Geenius, suppose that the word is to be taken *collectively*, not as referring to any particular individual, but to the High Priests in general. It is not uncommon to give the name "father" thus to a principal man among a people, and especially to one eminent in religious character, or authority. The word "*first*" here does not refer to *time*, but to *rank*; not the ancestor of the people, but the one having appropriately the title of father, who had the priority also in rank. The LXX render it, οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν πρῶτοι. It means, therefore, probably that the character of even the presiding officers in religion, the priests supreme in rank, and whose example was so important, had sinned; that there was irreligion at the very fountain of influence and authority; and that, therefore, it was necessary and proper to bring these heavy judgments on the nation. No one acquainted with the history of the Jewish people in the times immediately preceding the captivity, can doubt that this was the character of the High Priesthood. ¶ *And thy teachers.* Marg., *interpreters.* The word here used מלִּיטִי, *melitz-ēkhā*, is derived from לָלַץ, *lūtz*. This word means to stammer, to speak unintelligibly; and then to speak in a foreign and barbarous language, and then to interpret, to

act as an interpreter, from the idea of speaking a foreign tongue. Hence it may be used in the sense of an *internuncius*, or a messenger. 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. In Job xxxiii. 23, it is applied to an interceding angel; *i. e.* interceding with God for men. It is probably used in some such sense here. That it refers to the priests there can be no doubt, and is properly applied to them, because they sustained the office of *interceding* with God for his people; of *interpreting* his will to them, and generally of acting as *internuncii* or messengers between God and them. The LXX render it, "your rulers," ἀρχοντες.

28. *Therefore I have profaned.* The princes of the sanctuary, *i. e.*, the priests, were by their office regarded as sacred, or set apart to the service of God. To depose them from that office; to humble them; to subject them to punishment, and to send them into captivity, was, therefore, regarded as *profaning* them. They were stripped of their office, and robes, and honours, and reduced to the same condition, and compelled to meet with the same treatment, as the common people. The sense is, that he *had made them common* (for so the word קָלָל is used in Lev. xix. 8; xxi. 9; Mal. ii. 11; Ex. xxxi. 14; xix. 22; Mal. i. 12); he treated them as he did the common people; he did not regard their office; he used them all alike. ¶ *The princes of the sanctuary.* Marg., "holy princes." It means, either those who presided over and directed the services of the sanctuary, called in 1 Chron. xxiv. 5, "governors of the sanctuary;" or it means those who were holy in office—holy princes. The LXX render it,

τὰ ἁγία μου, who preside over my holy things, or my sanctuary. The Vulgate, "principes sanctos," holy princes. The Syriac, "thy princes have profaned the sanctuary." The sense is, that God had punished those who were set apart to the sacred office; had disregarded their official character, and had punished them in common with the people at large for their sins. ¶ *And have given Jacob to the curse.* Have devoted them to destruction. The LXX render it, "I have given Jacob to be destroyed." ἀπωλεία. The Hebrew word here used, חָרַם, *hêrēm*, is that which is commonly used to denote a solemn *anathema*, excommunication, or devotion to destruction. See Note on ch. xxxiv. 5. ¶ *To reproaches.* The reproach, contempt, and scorn which they met with in their captivity, and in a land of strangers. Comp. Ps. cxxxvii. 3, 4.

Thus far God states the causes or reasons why he had punished the nation. It had been on account of the national irreligion and sins—the sins of the rulers and the people; and the destruction had come upon all, but pre-eminently on the priests and the rulers. Here, in the arbitrary division which is made in the Bible into chapters, a very improper separation has been made, and here the chapter has been made to close. The sense of the whole passage is materially injured by this division, and the scope of the whole argument is forgotten. The design of the whole argument is, to shew that God would not leave his people; that though he punished them, yet he would not utterly destroy them; and that he would appear again for their rescue, and restore them to their own land. This argument is prosecuted in the following chapter, and in the commencement of that chapter the thought is pursued, that though God had thus punished them, yet he would appear and save them. The beginning of that chapter is properly the continuation and completion of the argument urged here, and *this* chapter should have closed at what is now the fifth verse of chapter xliv.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

## ANALYSIS.

It has already been observed (Note, ch. xliii. 28), that the commencement of this chapter is properly a continuation and completion of the argument commenced there; and that the division should have been made at what is now the close of the fifth verse of this chapter. This chapter may be divided into the following parts:—

I. The assurance that though they had sinned, and had been punished (ch. xliii. 23—28), yet that God would have mercy on them, and would deliver them, and restore them to his favor, and to their land, vs. 1—5. They had nothing to fear (vs. 1, 2); God would pour water on him that was thirsty, and would bless their offspring, and they should grow and flourish like willows by the waters (vs. 3—5), and there should be among them a general turning to the Lord, and devotion to his service, ver. 5.

II. An argument to shew that JEHOVAH was the true God; and a severe and most sarcastic reproof of idolatry—designed to reprove idolaters and to lead the people to put their confidence in JEHOVAH, vs. 6—20. This argument consists of the following parts. (a) A solemn assertion of JEHOVAH himself that there was no other God—that the Redeemer of Israel was the only true God, ver. 6. (b) An appeal to the fact that he only had foretold future events, and that he only could do it, vs. 7, 8. (c) A sarcastic statement of the manner in which idols were made, and of course the folly of putting their trust in them, or of worshipping them, vs. 9—17. (d) The stupidity and folly of those who make and worship idol gods, vs. 18—20.

III. The assurance that JEHOVAH would redeem Israel, and would deliver his people from all their calamities and oppressions, vs. 21—28. This part contains (1) The assurance that he would do it, and that their sins were blotted out (vs. 21, 22). (2.) A calling upon the heavens and the earth to rejoice over so great and glorious an event, (ver. 23.) (3.) An appeal to what JEHOVAH had



## CHAPTER XLIV.

1. Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant and Israel, whom I have chosen :

2. Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from

the womb, *which* will help <sup>a</sup> thee; Fear not, O Jacob my servant; and thou, Jesurun, <sup>b</sup> whom I have <sup>c</sup> chosen.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 46. 5. Heb. 4.

<sup>b</sup> Deut. 32. 15.

<sup>c</sup> Rom. 8. 30.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

1. Yet hear now, O Jacob my servant;  
And Israel whom I have chosen;
2. Thus saith JEHOVAH thy maker,  
And he that formed thee from the womb,  
And that will help thee;  
Fear not, O Jacob my servant,  
And Jeshurun whom I have chosen.

done and *could* do, as an evidence that he could deliver his people—to wit: he had formed the heavens—he had made the earth without aid—he made diviners mad—he frustrated the plans of the wise, and he had confirmed the promises which he had made by his servants (vs. 24—26); he said to Jerusalem that it should be inhabited, and the cities of Judah that they should be rebuilt; he had dried up the rivers; and he had raised up Cyrus for the express purpose of delivering his people (vs. 26—28); and by all this it should be known that he would visit, and vindicate, and restore them.

1. *Yet now hear.* This should be read in immediate connexion with the previous chapter. “Notwithstanding you have sinned and have been punished, yet now hear the gracious promise which is made in regard to your deliverance.”

2. *Thus saith the LORD that made thee.* See Note, ch. xliii. 1. ¶ *And formed thee from the womb.* This is equivalent to the declaration that he was their Maker, or Creator. It means, that from the very beginning of their history as a people, he had formed and moulded all their institutions, and directed all things in regard to them—as much as he is the former of the body from the commencement of its existence. It may be observed that the words, “from the womb,” are joined by some

interpreters with the phrase “that formed thee,” meaning that he had been the originator of all their customs, privileges, and laws, from the beginning of their history; and by others with the phrase, “will help thee,” meaning that from the commencement of their existence as a nation he had been their helper. According to the masoretic marks of distinction, the former is the true sense. So the LXX, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Lowth, &c. But Jerome, Luther, Noyes, and some others prefer the latter mode. ¶ *Fear not.* Note, ch. xli. 10. Though you have sinned as a people (ch. xliii. 23, 24, 27), and though all these heavy judgments have come upon you (ch. xliii. 28), yet you have no reason to fear that God will finally abandon and destroy you. ¶ *And thou Jeshurun*, יֵשׁוּרֻן, *yishūrūn*. This word occurs but four times in the Bible as a poetical name for the people of Israel, apparently expressing affection and tenderness, Deut. xxxii. 15; xxxiii. 5, 26; and in this place. It is, says Gesenius (Commentar. *in loc.*), “a flattering appellation (Schmeichelwort) for Israel,” and is probably a diminutive form יֵשׁוּר = יָשׁוּר, *yāshūr* = *yāshūr*, the passive form in an intransitive verb with an active signification. The ending *ūn*, he adds, is *terminatio charitiva*—a termination indicating affection or kindness. In his Lexicon, he observes, how-

3. For<sup>d</sup> I will pour water upon Spirit upon thy seed, <sup>e</sup> and my him that is thirsty, and floods upon blessing upon thine offspring:  
the dry ground: I will pour my 4. And they shall spring up <sup>f</sup>  
<sup>d</sup> John 7. 38. <sup>e</sup> ch. 59. 21. <sup>f</sup> Acts 2. 41.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

3. For I will pour out waters upon the thirsty,  
And flowing streams upon the dry ground.  
I will pour my spirit on thy children,  
And my blessing on thy offspring;  
4. And they shall grow up as among grass,  
And as willows beside the water-brooks.

ever (as translated by Robinson), that "it seems not improbable that it was a diminutive form of the name יִשְׂרָאֵל (Israel), which was current in common life for the fuller form, יִשְׂרָאֵלֻן (Israelun), a title of affection for Israel, but like other common words of this sort, contracted and more freely inflected, so as at the same time to imply an allusion to the signification of *right* or *uprightness* contained in the root יָשָׁר, *yāshūr*." Jerome renders it, "rectissime," most upright. The LXX render it, ἡγαπῆ-μένος Ἰσραὴλ, *beloved Israel*. The Syriac renders it, "Israel." So also the Chaldee. It is doubtless a title of affection, and probably includes the notion of uprightness or integrity.

3. *For I will pour water, &c.* Floods, rivers, streams, and waters, are often used in the Scriptures, and especially in Isaiah, to denote plenteous divine blessings, particularly the abundant influences of the Holy Spirit. See Note, ch. xxxv. 6, 7. That it here refers to the Holy Spirit and his influences, is proved by the parallel expressions in the subsequent part of the verse. ¶ *Upon him that is thirsty.* Or rather, "on the thirsty" (Lowth), or on "the thirsty land." The word נֶחֱם, *tzāmē*, refers here rather to land—to a waste, a wilderness, than to an individual or a people. The figure is taken from a waste wilderness, a burning sandy desert, where waters should be made to burst out in copious streams. See ch. xxxv. 6, 7. The sense is, that God would bestow blessings upon them as signal and mar-

vellous as if floods of waters were made to descend on the dry, parched, and desolated earth. ¶ *And floods.* The word נָזַל, *nōzelim*, from נָזַל, *nāzāl*, to flow, to run as liquids, means, properly, *flowings*, and is used for streams and rivers. Ex. xv. 8; Jer. xviii. 14; Ps. lxxviii. 16; Prov. v. 15. It means here that the blessings which God would bestow, the spiritual influences which would descend on the afflicted, desolate, comfortless, and exiled people, would be like torrents of rain poured on the thirsty earth. This beautiful figure is common in the Scriptures.

He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass,

And as showers that water the earth.

Ps. lxxii. 6

My doctrine shall drop as the rain,  
My speech shall distil as the dew,  
As the small rain upon the tender herb,  
And as the showers upon the grass.

Deut. xxxii. 2.

¶ *I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed.* On thy children. See ch. lix. 21. This is in accordance with the promise everywhere made in the Bible to the people of God. See Ex. xx. 6; Deut. vii. 9; Gen. xii. 7; xiii. 15; xv. 18; xvii. 7, 8; xxiv. 7; Ps. lxxxix. 4; Isa. xliii. 5. It may be regarded (1) as a promise of the richest blessings to them as parents—since there is to a parent's heart no promise or prospect so consoling as that which relates to their offspring; and (2) an assurance of the perpetuity of their religion; of their return from captivity, and their restoration to their own land.

4. *And they shall spring up.* And they shall grow up, or germinate. They

*as* among the grass, as willows by *himself* by the name of Jacob; the water courses. and another shall subscribe *with*

5. One <sup>g</sup> shall say, I *am* the his hand unto the Lord, and sur-  
 LORD's; and another shall call name *himself* by the name of  
 Israel.

*g* Jer. 50. 5. 2 Cor. 8. 5.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

5. One shall say, "I am JEHOVAH's;"

And another shall call himself by the name of Jacob;

And another shall write with his hand to be JEHOVAH's;

And shall surname himself by the name of Israel.

shall flourish; they shall be like well-watered plants; they shall be endowed with rich and abundant graces and blessings. The idea is, that as plants and trees that are planted by water-courses, and in well-watered fields, grow and flourish, so should their children grow in virtue, hope, piety, zeal, &c. ¶ *As among the grass.* As in places where the grass grows; as if they were in the midst of it, and were a part of it; they shall spring up and flourish as the grass does when abundantly watered from heaven. On the meaning of the unusual form of the word *בְּתֵּינָן*, *behtēnān*, in the Hebrew (*in among*), see Vitringa and Rosenmüller. The *א* here is undoubtedly an error of the transcriber for *ב*, *as*—an error which, from the similarity of the letters, might be readily made. The LXX read it *ως*—*as*. The Chaldee reads it *ב*, *as*. ¶ *As willows by the water courses.* By the rivulets of waters; or by the water-brooks. Willows are usually planted in such places, and grow rapidly and luxuriantly. It denotes here, rapid and luxuriant growth, abundant increase, vigour, and beauty; and means that their posterity should be abundantly blessed of God. A similar figure to denote the prosperity and happiness of the righteous occurs in Ps. i. 3:—

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,

That bringeth forth his fruit in his season;  
 His leaf also shall not wither.

These two verses teach us, (1.) That God will pour his blessing on the children of his people—a promise which, in all ages, when parents are faithful, is

abundantly fulfilled. (2.) That one of the richest blessings which can be imparted to a people is, that God's Spirit should descend on their children. Nothing can be better fitted to comfort them in calamity and trial. (3.) That the Spirit of God alone is the source of true happiness and prosperity to our children. All else—property, learning, accomplishment, beauty, vigor, will be vain. It is by his blessing only—by the influence of piety—that they will spring forth as among the grass, and like willows by the streams of water. (4.) Parents should seek this blessing as the richest inheritance which they can have for their children. Parents may leave the world in peace if they see the divine blessing—the Spirit of God, descend on their children like waters on the thirsty land, and like torrents upon the dry ground. (5.) Parents should pray earnestly for a revival of religion. No better description can be given of a revival than that given here, of the Spirit of God descending like streams and floods, on the children and the young; and their springing forth, in the graces of piety, as among the grass, and growing in love to God and love to men, like willows by the water-courses. Who would not pray for such a work of grace? What family, what congregation, what people, can be happy or blessed without it?

5. *One shall say.* It shall be common to say this. A profession of religion shall be common. Many shall come and subscribe their names to the covenant with God, and profess attachment to him. The various expressions in this verse mean substantially the same

thing—that there should prevail among the people a disposition to make a profession of attachment to JEHOVAH in every proper public manner. It is in immediate connexion with what is said in the previous verses, that he would pour his Spirit upon them, and especially on their children. The effect would be, that many would make a public and open profession of religion. This refers, doubtless, in the main, to the period after their return from the captivity, and to the general prevalence of religion then. But it is also true of the people of God at all times—especially under the Messiah. God pours his Spirit like gentle dews, or falling torrents, on the families of his people; and the effect is, that many publicly profess attachment to him. ¶ *I am the LORD's.* I belong to JEHOVAH; I devote myself to him. This expresses the true nature of a profession of religion—a feeling that we are not our own, but that we belong to God. It is, that we not only feel that we are bound to worship him, but that we actually *belong* to him; that our bodies and spirits, and all that we have and are, are his, and are to be sacredly employed in his service, and his service alone. See 1 Cor. vi. 20; 2 Cor. viii. 5; v. 14, 15. Nothing, in few words, can more appropriately describe the true nature of a profession of religion, than the expression here used, לַיהוָה אֲנִי “for JEHOVAH am I”—I am wholly, and entirely, and for ever for JEHOVAH, to serve him; to obey him; to do his will; to suffer patiently all that he appoints; to live where he directs; to do what he requires; to die when, where, and how he pleases; to moulder in the grave according to his will; to be raised up by his power; and to serve him for ever in a better world. ¶ *And another shall call himself by the name of Jacob.* The Chaldee renders this, “He shall pray in the name of Jacob.” The idea seems to be, that he should call himself a friend of Jacob—a Jacobite—an Israelite. He should regard himself as belonging to the same family and the same religion as Jacob; as worshipping the same God; and as maintaining the

same belief. To call oneself by the same name as another, is indicative of friendship and affection, and is expressive of a purpose to be considered as united to him, and to identify our interest with his. The idea is that which one would express by saying, that he cast in his interest with the people of God, he became identified with them; as we now say, a man calls himself by the name of Christ, i. e., a Christian. Jerome renders this, “he shall call by the name of Jacob; i. e., sinners to repentance.” Comp. Note, ch. xliii. 7; ch. xlviii. 1; Ps. xxiv. 6. The idea is, probably, that they should call Jacob their ancestor, and speak of themselves as his descendants, worshipping the same God, and regarding themselves as the same people. See Gen. xlviii. 16, where Jacob says, “The angel, which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be on them, and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac.” ¶ *And another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD.* The LXX render this, “and another shall write with his hand *χρει* I am of God.” Lowth, “on his hand,” Aq. Sym. *χρη*α. Lowth supposes that the allusion here is to the marks which were made indelible by puncture, by ink or staining, on the hand or on other parts of the body—in the same way as is now often seen. He supposes that the mark thus indelibly impressed was the name of the person, or the name of the master if he was a slave; or some indication by which it might be known to whom he belonged. In this way, the soldier marked himself with the name of his commander; the idolater, with the name of his god; and in this way Procopius says that the early Christians marked themselves. On this passage he says, “Because many marked their wrists or their arms with the sign of the cross, or with the name of Christ.” See Rev. xx. 4; Spencer de Leg. Hebr. L. ii. c. 20. But all this is too refined, and is evidently a departure from the true sense of the passage. The mark, or writing, was not on the hand, but with it; literally, “and this shall write his hand to JEHOVAH;” and the figure

6. Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his Redeemer

NEW TRANSLATION.

6. Thus saith JEHOVAH, the king of Israel,  
And his Redeemer, JEHOVAH of hosts:—

is evidently taken from the mode of making a contract or bargain, where the name is subscribed to the instrument. It was a solemn compact or covenant, by which they enrolled themselves among the true worshippers of God; gave in their names to be recorded, and pledged themselves to his service. The manner of a contract among the Hebrews is described in Jer. xxxii. 10, 12, 44. A public, solemn, and recorded covenant, to which the names of princes, Levites, and priests, were subscribed, and which was sealed, by which they bound themselves to the service of God, is mentioned in Neh. ix. 38. Here it denotes the solemn manner in which they would profess to be worshippers of the true God. And it is expressive of the true nature of a profession of religion. The name is given in to God. It is enrolled by the voluntary desire of him who makes the profession. It is recorded among his friends. It is done, after the manner of solemn compacts among men, in the presence of witnesses. Heb. xii. 1. Among Christians, it is sealed in a solemn manner by baptism and the Lord's supper. It has, therefore, all the binding force and obligation of a solemn compact; and every professor of religion should regard his compact with God, his covenant with him, as the most sacred of all compacts, and as having a more solemn obligation than any other. And yet, how many professors are there who would shrink back with horror from the idea of breaking a compact with man, who have no alarm at the idea of having proved unfaithful to their solemn pledge, that they would belong wholly to God, and would live to him alone. Let every professor of religion remember that his profession has all the force of a solemn compact; that he has voluntarily subscribed his name, and enrolled himself among the friends of God; and that there is no agreement of a more binding

nature than that which unites him in public profession to the cause and the kingdom of God. ¶ *And surname himself by the name of Israel.* Shall call himself an Israelite; shall be united to the family and people of that name; and shall be a worshipper of the same God. The word rendered, "shall surname," (קָנָה, *kānāh*, not used in Kal, in Piel, קָנָה, *kinnāh*,) means to address in a friendly and soothing manner; to speak kindly to any one. Gesenius renders it, "and kindly, soothingly, names the name of Israel." Noyes renders it, "and seek the protection of Israel." But the idea is probably that expressed in our translation. The word is not often used. It is used, sometimes, to denote a giving of flattering titles to any one, either by way of dignity or of compliment. Job xxxii. 21, 22.

Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person;

Neither let me give flattering titles unto man.

For I know not to give flattering titles;

In so doing my Maker would soon take me away.

In Isa. xlv. 4, it is rendered, "I have surnamed thee [Cyrus] though thou hast not known me." The word does not occur elsewhere. It conveys the idea of an honorable title; and means here, I think, that he would call himself by the honorable appellation of Israel—or an Israelite—a worshipper of the God of Jacob. It implies that a profession of the true religion is honorable, and that it is, and should be, esteemed so by him who makes it. It is observable, also, that this verse contains an instance of the parallelism in the Hebrew writings, where the alternate members correspond to each other. Here the first and third members constitute the parallelism, and the second and the fourth correspond to each other. See the Introduction, § 7.

6. Thus saith the LORD. This commences, as I suppose (see the Analysis),

<sup>a</sup> the LORD of hosts; I <sup>i</sup> am the first, and I am the last; and beside <sup>k</sup> me *there is no God.*

7. And <sup>l</sup> who, as I, shall call,

<sup>A</sup> ch. 43. 14. <sup>i</sup> Rev. 1. 8, 17.  
<sup>A</sup> Deut. 4. 35, 39; 32. 39. <sup>i</sup> ch. 46. 9, 10.

and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

I am the first, and I am the last,  
And besides me, there is no God.

7. And who like me shall call forth [an event],  
And announce it, and set it in order for me;—  
Since I first established this ancient people?  
The things that are now coming, and shall come hereafter,  
Let them shew them unto them.

the argument to prove that JEHOVAH is the only true God, and that the idols were vanity. The object is, to induce the people to put their confidence in Him rather than in idols; and to shew to the Jews, that he who had made to them such promises of protection and deliverance was able to perform what he had pledged himself to do. ¶ *The King of Israel.* . One of whose appellations is, that he is the King of Israel. God in the Jewish economy was regarded as the *real* sovereign, or monarch of the nation; and the government has been usually called a theocracy. See Note, ch. xli. 21. ¶ *And his Redeemer.* The God whose characteristic it is, that he has delivered the Jewish people in times of peril, and rescued them from danger. See Note on ch. xliii. 1. *The LORD of hosts.* Another of the names of God, indicating his immense and boundless dominion and power. See Note, ch. i. 9. ¶ *I am the first.* See Note, ch. xli. 4. ¶ *And I am the last.* In ch. xli. 4, this is expressed "*with the last;*" in Rev. i. 8, "I am Alpha and Omega." The sense is, that God existed before all things, and will exist for ever. ¶ *And beside me there is no God.* This is repeatedly declared. Deut. iv. 35, 39. See Note, ch. xliii. 11. This great truth it was God's purpose to keep steadily before the minds of the Jews; and to keep it in the world, and ultimately diffuse it abroad among the

nations, was one of the leading reasons why he selected them as a peculiar people, and separated them from the rest of mankind.

7. *And who, as I.* This verse contains an *argument* to prove that he is God. In proof of this, he appeals to the fact that he alone can predict future events, and certainly declare the *order* and the *time* in which they will come to pass. This is an argument to which he often appeals in proof that he alone is God. See Note, ch. xli. 21, 22, 23; xli. 9, 10. ¶ *Shall call.* That is, call forth the event, or command that to happen which he wills; *secure* an event by calling, or ordering it—one of the highest possible exhibitions of power. See a similar use of the word "call," in ch. xli. 11; xlviii. 15. ¶ *And shall declare it.* Declare, or announce

by his purpose or decree, he announces beforehand. ¶ *And set it in order.* Arrange it; dispose it in its proper order; secure the proper succession and place. See Note, ch. xli. 22. The word here used, *וָרָאֵךְ*, *varûkh*, denotes, properly, to place in a row; set in order; arrange. It is of the same signification as the Greek *τάσσω* or *τάττω*, and is applied to placing the wood upon the altar in a proper manner, Gen. xxii. 9; or to placing the shew-bread in proper order on the table, Lev. xxiv. 8; and

8. Fear <sup>m</sup> ye not, neither be ye *are* even my <sup>n</sup> witnesses. Is afraid: have not I told thee from there a <sup>1</sup> God beside me? yea, that time, and have declared *it*? *there is* no God; I know not *any*.

m Prov. 3. 25, 26.

n 1 John 5. 10.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

8. Fear ye not, neither be ye afraid :—

Have I not made known to thee, and declared to thee of old ?

And ye are my witnesses.

Is there a God besides me ?

Yea, there is no other Rock ;

I know not any.

especially to setting an army in order ; or marshalling it, or putting it in battle array. Judg. xx. 20, 22 ; 1 Sam. xvii. 2 ; Gen. xiv. 8. Here it means, that God would arrange the events in a proper order, or regular array—as an army is marshalled and arrayed for battle. They should succeed each other in a regular manner. There should be no improper sequences of events ; no chance ; no hap-hazard ; no confusion. The events which take place under his government, occur in proper order and time, and so as best to subserve his plans. ¶ *For me*. In order to execute my plans, and to promote my glory. The events on earth are for God. They are such as he chooses to ordain ; and they are arranged in the manner which he chooses ; and they are such as tend to promote his glory. ¶ *Since I appointed the ancient people?* “From my constituting the people of old ;” that is, God had done this ; he had given them intimations of future events from the very period when he, in times long past, had selected and appointed them as his people. Thus to Abraham—the founder of the nation—to Isaac, and to Jacob, he had given clear intimations of what he would do. He had done it in the earliest times of their history ; and he had done it constantly. They were, therefore, qualified to be his witnesses, ver. 8. ¶ *And the things that are coming*. The events which are yet to come to pass. ¶ *Let them shew, &c.* Let the worshippers of idols, the pretended prophets of the heathen religions, foretell them. See Note, ch. xli. 22, 23.

8. *Fear ye not, &c.* Note, ch. xli. 10. Since I have shewn that I could foretell future events ; since all my former predictions have come to pass ; and since I have solemnly promised you future safety and deliverance, you have no occasion to be alarmed at all that your enemies can do. The word here rendered “be afraid,” occurs nowhere else in the Bible. There can be no doubt, however, in regard to its meaning. The LXX render it *μηδὲ πλανᾶσθε*, “neither be deceived.” “All the other ancient versions express the sense to fear, to be afraid.” Gesenius, Lex. on the word, *ירָא*. ¶ *Have not I told thee from that time*. Have I not fully declared from the very commencement of your history as a people, in the main what shall occur? Have I not steadily and constantly predicted future events ; made your nation the depository of the oracles in regard to future times ; thus shewn that you were the favored people ; and thus demonstrated among you that I alone am God. They had had evidence that he was able to predict future events ; evidence that he was God ; and evidence that he was their God, and protector. They had nothing, therefore, to fear. ¶ *Ye are even my witnesses*. See Note, ch. xliii. 12. They were witnesses, because he had shewn to them by predicting future events that he was God. ¶ *Is there a God beside me?* This is a strong mode of affirming that there is no God besides JEHOVAH. See Note on ver. 6. ¶ *Yea, there is no God*. Marg., “rock.” *צור*, *tzûr*. The word *rock* is often ap-

9. They ° that make a graven image *are* all of them vanity; and their <sup>1</sup> delectable things shall not profit; and they *are* their own

witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.

10. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image *that* is profitable <sup>P</sup> for nothing?

° ch. 41. 24, 25.

<sup>1</sup> desirable.

<sup>P</sup> Hab. 2. 18. 1 Cor. 8. 4.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

9. The formers of a graven image are all of them vanity;  
And their much valued objects shall not profit;  
And they are their own witnesses—  
They see not, and they do not understand,  
So that they shall be ashamed.

10. Who has formed a god,  
And cast an image, that is profitable for nothing?

plied to God. See Note, ch. xxx. 29. Comp. Deut. xxxii. 4, 30, 31; Ps. xix. 14; xxxi. 2, 3; xlii. 9, et sæpe aliàs. The idea is taken from the fact that a lofty rock or fastness was inaccessible by an enemy, was firm against attacks, and that those who fled there were safe.

9. *They that make a graven image.* A graven image is one that is cut, or sculptured out of wood or stone, in contradistinction from one that is molten, which is made by being cast. Here it is used to denote an image, or an idol god in general. God had asserted in the previous verses his own divinity, and he now proceeds to show, at length, the vanity of idols, and of idol worship. This same topic was introduced in ch. xl. 18—20 (see Notes on that passage), but it is here pursued at greater length, and in a tone and manner far more sarcastic and severe. The design is, doubtless, to set forth the folly of idolatry in general. *Perhaps* also the prophet had two immediate objects in view, first, to reprove the idolatrous spirit in his own time, which prevailed especially in the early part of the reign of Manasseh; and secondly, to show to the exile Jews in Babylon that the gods of the Babylonians could not protect their city, and that JEHOVAH could easily overthrow them, and rescue his own people. He begins, therefore, by saying that the *makers* of the idols were all of them vanity. Of course, the idols themselves could have

no more power than their makers, and must be vanity also. ¶ *Are all of them vanity.* Are all vain, weak, feeble, mortal men. Perhaps, also, it is intended that *they* were peculiarly vanity—they were more stupid, vain, senseless than any other class of men. See Note, ch. xli. 29. ¶ *And their delectable things.* Marg., “desirable.” The sense is, their valued works; that which they delight in; their idol gods, which they have so beautifully decorated, on which they have lavished so much expense, and which they prize so highly. ¶ *Shall not profit.* Shall not be able to aid, or protect them; shall be of no advantage to them. See Heb. ii. 18. ¶ *And they are their own witnesses.* We may appeal to themselves on the subject. They can foretell nothing; they can furnish no aid; they cannot defend them in times of danger. This may refer either to the worshippers, or to the idols themselves—and was alike true of both. ¶ *They see not.* They have no power of discerning anything. How can they then foresee future events? ¶ *That they may be ashamed.* The same sentiment is repeated in ver. 11, and in ch. xlv. 16. The sense is, that shame and confusion must await all who put their trust in an idol god. They cannot defend, they cannot deliver, those who rely on them.

10. *Who hath formed a god, &c.* The LXX read this verse in connexion with the close of the previous verse. “But



11. Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: <sup>q</sup> and the workmen, they *are* of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; *yet* they shall fear, *and* they shall be ashamed together.

*q* Ps. 97. 7.

12. The smith<sup>r</sup> with the<sup>1</sup> tongs both worked in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint.

*r* ch. 40. 19, &c.

<sup>1</sup> *or, an axe.*

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

11. Behold, all his associates shall be ashamed;  
And the artificers are themselves but mortal men;  
Let them all be gathered together; let them stand forth;  
They shall tremble: they shall be put to shame together.
12. The smith prepareth an axe—  
He worketh it in the coals, and with hammers he fashioneth it;  
And he labors at it with the arm of his strength:  
Yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth him;  
He drinketh no water, and he is faint.

they shall be ashamed who make a god, and all who sculpture unprofitable things." This interpretation, also, Lowth, by a change in the Hebrew text, on the authority of a MS. in the Bodleian library, has adopted. This change is made by reading *נָּ, כִּי*, instead of *נָּ, מִי*, in the beginning of the verse. But the authority of the change, being that of a single MS. and the Septuagint, is not sufficient. Nor is it necessary. The question is designed to be ironical and sarcastic: "Who is there," says the prophet, "that has done this? Who are they that are engaged in this stupid work? Do they give marks of a sound mind? Are they well employed?" Who they are, and what is the nature of their employment, he proceeds to state in the following verses. The whole passage is sarcastic in a high degree. "What is, and must be, the character of a man that has formed a god, and that has made an unprofitable graven image?"

11 *Behold, all his fellows.* All who are associated as the companions of the idol god. All that are joined in making it, and in worshipping it, are regarded as the fellows, or the companions, *חֲבֵרָיו*, of the idol god. See Hos. iv. 17. "Ephraim is joined to idols." They

and the idols constitute one company or fellowship, intimately allied to each other. ¶ *Shall be ashamed.* Shall be confounded when they find that their idols cannot aid them; or shall be ashamed by the true representation of their character which the prophet is about to make. They are united in a confederacy which cannot but overwhelm them in shame and disgrace. ¶ *And the workmen.* Those who are engaged in making them. The allusion to them is to show that what they made could not be worthy of the confidence of men as an object of worship. ¶ *They are of men.* They are mortal men; they must themselves soon die; they are weak and feeble. It is ridiculous, therefore, for them to attempt to make a god that can defend or save, or that should be adored. ¶ *Let them all be gathered together.* For purposes of trial, or to urge their claims to the right and power of making an object that should be adored. See Note, ch. xli. 1. ¶ *Let them stand up.* As in a court of justice, to defend their cause. See Note, ch. xli. 21. ¶ *They shall fear.* They shall be alarmed when danger comes. They shall find that their idol gods shall not be able to defend them.

12. *The smith with the tongs.* The

prophet proceeds here to show the folly and absurdity of idolatry; and in order to this he goes into an extended statement (ver. 12—19) of the manner in which idols were usually made. The purpose is, to show the folly and stupidity of worshipping gods that were made in this manner. Lowth remarks, "The sacred writers are generally large and eloquent on the subject of idolatry; they treat it with great severity, and set forth the absurdity of it in the strongest light. But this passage of Isaiah far exceeds anything that was ever written on the subject, in force of argument, energy of expression, and elegance of composition. One or two of the Apocryphal writers have attempted to imitate the prophet, but with very ill success. Wisdom xiii. 11—19; xv. 7, &c. Baruch, ch. vi." Horace, however, has given a description of the making of idols, which for severity of satire, and pungency of sarcasm, has a strong resemblance to this description in Isaiah:

"Olim truncus eram ficulnus, inutile lignum;  
Cum faber, incertus scammum faceretne Priapum,  
Maluit esse Deum." SAT. Lib. i. viii. 1—3.

Lowth renders the phrase "the smith with the tongs," &c., "the smith cutteth off a portion of iron." Noyes, "The smith prepareth an axe." The LXX, "the carpenter sharpeneth, ὠξυνε, iron," σιδηρον, i. e., an axe. So also the Syriac. Gesenius renders it, "the smith makes an axe." Many renderings of the passage have been proposed; the following will express the principal. "The smith makes, proposes, or takes (Calvin) a chip-axe;" or "a file;" or "a hatchet, with which the carpenter cuts down the tree," &c. See Pool's Synopsis. The idea in this verse is, I think, that the prophet describes the commencement of the process of making a graven image. For that purpose he goes back even to the making of the tools or instruments by which it is manufactured, and in this verse he describes the process of making an axe, with a view to the cutting down of the tree, and forming a god. That he does not here refer to the making of the idol itself is

apparent, I think, from the fact that the process here described is that of working in iron; but idols were not made of iron, and the idol here described especially (ver. 11, seq.) is one made of wood. The phrase here used, therefore, refers to the process of axemaking with a view to cutting down a tree to make a god; and the prophet describes the ardor and activity with which it is done, to show how much haste they were in to complete a god. The literal translation of this phrase is, therefore, "The workmen, חָרָשׁ, *hhārāsh*, (st. const. for חָרָשׁ, *hhārāsh*), of iron [maketh] an axe." ¶ Both worketh in the coals. And he works the piece of iron of which he is making an axe in the coals. He heats it so that he may form and fashion it—referring to the axe, not the idol—for the tree is not yet cut down of which to make the idol, ver. 14. He blows the coals in order to produce an intense heat. See ch. liv. 16. "Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire." ¶ And fashioneth it with hammers. Forms the mass of iron into an axe. Axes were not cast, but wrought. ¶ And worketh it with the strength of his arms. The arms are principally employed in the work of the smith. Or, he works it with his strong arms—referring to the fact that the arm of the smith by constant usage becomes exceedingly strong. A description remarkably similar to this occurs in Virgil when he is describing the Cyclops:

"Illi inter sese magnā vi brachia tollunt  
In numerum; versantque tenaci forcipe ferum."  
GEORG. iv. 174, 175.

"Heaved with vast strength their arms in order  
rise,  
And blow to blow in measured chime replies;  
While with firm tongs they turn the sparkling  
ore,  
And Ætna's caves with ponderous anvils  
roar."  
SOTHEBY.

¶ Yea, he is hungry. He exhausts himself by his hard labor. The idea is, that he is so anxious to have it done, so engaged, so diligent, that he does not even stop to take the necessary refreshments. ¶ And his strength failed. He works till he is completely exhausted.

13. The carpenter stretcheth out *his* rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

13. The carpenter stretcheth out the line,  
He worketh it with sharp tools,  
He marketh it out with the compass,  
He maketh it in the figure of a man,  
According to the beauty of the human form;  
To dwell in a temple.

¶ *He drinketh no water.* He does not intermit his work even long enough to take a draught of water, so intense is he, and so hurried. While the iron is hot, he works with intense ardor, lest it should grow cool, and his work be retarded—a very graphic description of what all have seen in a blacksmith's shop. The Rev. J. Williams states that when the South Sea Islanders made an idol, they strictly abstained from food; and although they might be, and were sometimes, three days about the work, no water, and he believes no food, passed their lips all the time. This fact would convey a satisfactory elucidation of an allusion not otherwise easily explained. *Pictorial Bible.*

13. *The carpenter.* The axe is made (ver. 12), and the carpenter now proceeds to the construction of the god. The object of the prophet is to turn the subject into derision, and to show the folly of adoring gods that are made in this manner. ¶ *Stretcheth out his rule.* For the purpose of laying out his work, or measuring it. The word here rendered "rule," however, קָוָה, *qāw*, means, properly, a *line*, and should be so rendered here. The carpenter *stretches out* a line, but not a rule. ¶ *He marketh it out with a line.* He marks out the shape, the length, and breadth, and thickness of the body, in the rough and unhewn piece of wood. He has an idea in his mind of the proper *shape* of a god, and he goes to work to make one of that form. The expression "to mark out with a line," is, however, not congruous. The word which is here used, and which

is rendered "line," קוֹר, occurs nowhere else in the Bible. Lowth renders it, "red-ochre." So Kimchi renders it. According to this the reference is to the chalk, or red clay, or crayon, which a carpenter uses on a line to mark out his work. But according to Gesenius, the word means an *awl*, or rather a *stylus*, or *engraver*, with which the artist sketches the outlines of the figure to be sculptured. A carpenter always uses such an instrument in laying out, and marking his work. ¶ *He fitteth it with planes.* Or rather, with *chisels*, or carving tools, with which wooden images were carved. Planes are rather adapted to a smooth surface; carving is performed with chisels. The word is derived from קָצַץ, *qāzāz*, to cut off. The Targum renders it, אֶזְמֵל, *āzmēl*, a knife. The LXX render this, "framed it by rule, and glued the parts together." ¶ *Marketh it out with the compass.* From חָגַל, *haghāl*, to make a circle, to revolve, as compasses do. By a compass he accurately designates the parts, and marks out the symmetry of the form; designates the part for the head, the breast, &c. ¶ *According to the beauty of a man.* Perhaps there may be a little sarcasm here in the thought that a god should be made in the shape of a man. It was true, however, that the statues of the gods among the ancients were made after the most perfect conceptions of the human form. The statuary of the Greeks was of this description, and the images of Apollo, of Venus, of Jupiter, &c., have been celebrated everywhere.

14. He heweth him down cedars, himself among the trees of the and taketh the cypress and the forest: he planteth an ash, and the oak, which he strengtheneth<sup>1</sup> for rain doth nourish it.

<sup>1</sup> or, taketh courage.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

14. He heweth down cedars for his use,  
And taketh the ilex and the oak,  
And works hard for himself among the trees of the forest;  
He planteth the ash, and the rain nourisheth it.

as the most perfect representations of the human form. ¶ *That it may remain in the house.* To dwell in a temple. Such statues were usually made to decorate a temple; or rather, perhaps temples were reared to be dwelling-places of the gods. It may be implied here, that the idol was of no use but to remain in a house. It could not hear, or save. It was like a useless piece of furniture, and had none of the attributes of God.

14. *He heweth him down cedars.* In the previous verses, the prophet had described the formation of an axe with which the work was to be done (ver. 12), and the laying out, and carving of the idol (ver. 13). In this verse he proceeds to describe the *material* of which the idol was made, and the different purposes (vs. 15—17) to which that material was applied. The *object* is to show the amazing stupidity of those who should worship a god made of the same material from which they made a fire to warm themselves, or to cook their food. For a description of cedars, see Note, ch. ix 10. ¶ *And taketh.* Takes to himself; that is, makes use of. ¶ *The cypress.* תרש, *tr-āh*. This word occurs nowhere else in the Bible. It is probably derived from a root (תרש, *tārāz*), signifying to be hard, or firm. Here it probably means some species of wood that derived its name from its hardness, or firmness. Jerome translates it *ilex*—a species of oak, the *holm-oak*. It was an evergreen. This species of evergreen, Gesenius says, was abundant in Palestine. ¶ *And the oak.* The oak was commonly used for this purpose on account of its hardness and

durability. ¶ *Which he strengtheneth for himself.* Marg., “taketh courage.” The word יָצַק, means, properly, to strengthen, to make strong, to repair, to replace, to harden. Rosenmüller and Gesenius suppose that it means here to *choose*, i. e., to set fast, or appoint; and they appeal to Ps. lxxx. 15, 17, “thou madest strong for thyself.” Kimchi supposes that it means, that he gave himself with the utmost diligence and care to select the best kinds of wood for the purpose. Vitringa, that he was intent on his work, and did not leave the place, but refreshed himself with food in the woods without returning home, in order that he might accomplish his design. Others interpret it to mean, that he girded himself with strength, and made use of his most intense efforts in felling the trees of the forest. Lowth renders it, “and layeth in good store of the trees of the forest.” It may mean, that he gave himself with great vigor and diligence to the work. Or may it not mean, that he *planted* such trees, and took great pains in watering and cultivating them for this purpose? ¶ *He planteth an ash,* אֶשְׁחָל, *ash-chal*. Gesenius supposes that this means the pine. The Septuagint renders it *pine*, πινυ. Jerome also renders it *pinum*. Gesenius supposes the name was given from the fact that the tree had a tall and slender top, which, when it vibrated, gave forth a tremulous, creaking sound (אֶשְׁחָל, *rānān*). This derivation is, however, somewhat fanciful. Most interpreters regard it as the *ash*—a well-known tree. In idolatrous countries where there were many gods, and especially where it was common to have

15. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it: he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.

16. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire:

NEW TRANSLATION.

15. And it is for fuel for man;  
And he taketh thereof and warmeth himself;  
Yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread;  
Also he maketh a god of it, and worshippeth it!  
He maketh it a graven image, and boweth down unto it!
16. Part of it he burneth in the fire;  
With part of it he prepareth flesh for food;  
He roasteth meat and is satisfied;  
He also warmeth himself, and saith,  
"Ah! I am warm; I see the fire!"

idols in almost every family, as it usually is in such countries, the business of *idol-making* is a very important manufacture. Of course large quantities of wood would be needed; and it would be an object to procure that which was most pure, or, as we say, "clear stuff," and which would work easily, and to advantage. It became important, therefore, to *cultivate* that wood, as we do for ship-building, or for cabinet work; and doubtless groves were planted, and cultivated for this purpose. ¶ *And the rain doth nourish* it. These circumstances are mentioned to show the folly of worshipping a god that was formed in this manner. *Perhaps* also the prophet means to intimate, that though the man planted the tree, yet that he could not make it grow. He was dependent on the rains of heaven; and even in making an idol he was dependent on the providential care of the true God. Men in their schemes of wickedness are dependent on the true God. They can do nothing without his upholding hand. Even in forming and executing plans to oppose and resist him, they can do nothing without his aid. He preserves them, feeds them, clothes them; and the instruments which they use against him are those which he has nurtured,

and which they abuse. On the rain of heaven; on the sunbeam and the dew; on the teeming earth; and on the elements which he has made, and which he controls, they are dependent; and they can do nothing in their wicked plans without his aid, and without abusing the bounties of his Providence, and the expressions of his tender mercy.

15. *Then shall it be for a man to burn.* It will afford materials for a fire. It is properly adapted to this purpose. The design of this verse and the following is, to ridicule the idea of a man's using parts of the same tree to make a fire, to cook his victuals, to warm himself, and to shape a god. It is keen and severe satire. See the quotation from Horace on ver. 12. Nothing could be more stupid than the conduct here referred to; and yet it is common all over the heathen world. It shows the utter debasement of the human mind, and the deep and dreadful depravity of the race, that they thus of the same tree make a fire, cook their food, and construct their gods.

16. *With part thereof he eateth flesh.* That is, he prepares flesh to eat, or prepares his food. ¶ *He roasteth roast.* He roasts meat.

17. And the residue thereof he maketh a god, *even* his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.

18. They ' have not known nor understood: for ' he hath ' shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.

\* ch. 45. 20.

† ch. 6. 9, 10.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

17. And the remainder of it he maketh into a god! a graven image: He falleth down before it, and worshippeth it, And he prayeth unto it, and saith, "Deliver me, for thou art my God!"
18. They know not, neither do they understand; For as to their eyes, they are closed from seeing, And their hearts from understanding.

18. *They have not known nor understood.* They are stupid, ignorant, and blind. Nothing could more strikingly show their ignorance and stupidity than this idol worship. ¶ *He hath shut their eyes.* God has closed their eyes. Marg., "daubed." The word here used, *tāh*, from *tāh*, *tāh*, denotes, properly, to spread over, to besmear, to plaster; as, e. g., a wall with mortar. Lev. xiv. 42; 1 Chron. xxix. 4; Ezek. xiii. 10; xxii. 28. Here the sense is plain. It means, to cover over the eyes so as to prevent vision; and hence, metaphorically, to make them stupid, ignorant, dull. It is attributed to God in accordance with the common statement of the Scriptures, that he does what he permits to be done. See Note, ch. vi. 9, 10. It does not mean that God had done it by any physical or direct agency, but that it had occurred under the administration of his Providence. It is also true that the Hebrew writers sometimes employ an active verb when the signification is passive, and when the main idea is, that anything was *in fact* done. Here the main point is not the *agent* by which this was done, but the *fact* that their eyes were blinded; and perhaps all the force of the verb *tāh*, used here, would be expressed if it was rendered in an impersonal, or in a passive form, "it is covered as to their eyes," i. e., their eyes are shut, without suggesting

that it was done by God. So the LXX render it, ἀπημαυρώθησαν, they are blind, or involved in darkness. So the Chaldee, *metāmtmān*, also in the plural—their eyes are obscured or blind. The main idea is, the *fact* that it was done. It cannot be proved from this text that God is by direct agency the author by whom it was done. That it was not uncommon to shut up, or seal up the eyes for various purposes in the East, is apparent from the following extract from Harmer's Observations; and unquestionably the prophet alludes to some such custom. "It is one of the solemnities at a Jewish wedding at Aleppo, according to Dr. Russell, who mentions it as the most remarkable thing in their ceremonies at that time. It is done by fastening the eyelids together with a gum, and the bridegroom is the person, he says, if he remembered right, that opens the bride's eyes at the appointed time. It is also used as a punishment in those countries. So Sir Thomas Roe's chaplain, in his account of his voyages to East India, tells us of a son of the Great Mogul, whom he had seen, and with whom Sir Thomas had conversed, that had before that time been cast into prison by his father, where his eyes were sealed up by something put before them which might not be taken off for three years; after which time the seal was taken away, that he

19. And none<sup>1</sup> considereth<sup>u</sup> in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abo-

<sup>1</sup> *setteth to.*

<sup>u</sup> Hos. 7. 2.

mination? shall I fall down to<sup>1</sup> the stock of a tree?

20. He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart<sup>x</sup> hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, *Is there* not a lie in my right hand?

<sup>1</sup> *that which comes of.*

<sup>x</sup> Hos. 4. 12. Rom. 1. 21. 2 Thes. 2. 11.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

19. And none layeth it to his heart,  
Neither is their knowledge nor understanding to say:  
"Part of it I have burned in the fire;  
"I have also baked bread upon the coals of it;  
"I have roasted meat, and have eaten;  
"And of the remnant shall I make an abomination?  
"Shall I fall down before the stock of a tree?"
20. He feedeth on ashes;  
A deluded heart turneth him aside,  
So that he cannot deliver his own soul,  
Nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

might with freedom enjoy the light, though not his liberty." Harmer's *Observ.* vol. iii. pp. 507, 508. Ed. Lond. 8vo, 1808. ¶ *And their hearts.* That is, their hearts are stupid, dull, insensible. The *heart*, in the Scriptures, is often used to denote the whole mind. *They* were blind, stupid, and dull, so that they could not understand,—a striking description of the pagan world even as it is now.

19. *And none considereth in his heart.* Marg., "setteth to." He does not place the subject near his heart, or mind; he does not think of it. A similar phrase occurs in ch. xlvi. 8: "Bring it again to mind." It is a phrase drawn from the act of placing an object near us in order to examine it closely; and we express the same idea by the phrase, "looking at a thing," "looking at it closely," &c. The sense is, they had not attentively and carefully thought on the folly of what they were doing—a sentiment which is as true of all sinners as it was of stupid idolators. ¶ *An abomination.* A name that is often given to an idol. 1 Kings xi. 5, 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

The meaning is, that an idol was abominable and detestable in the sight of a holy God. It was that which he could not endure. *Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?* Marg., "That which comes of." The word *נֶזֶק* means, properly, produce, increase, and here evidently a stock or trunk of wood. So it is in the Chaldee.

20. *He feedeth on ashes.* There have been various interpretations of this. Jerome renders it, "a part of it is ashes;" the Chaldee, "lo! half of the god is reduced to ashes;" the Septuagint, "know thou that their heart is ashes." The word here rendered "feedeth," *רָעָה*, *rō'ēh*, means, properly, to feed, graze, pasture; and then, figuratively, to delight in anything, or take pleasure in any person or thing. Prov. xiii. 20; xxviii. 7; xxix. 3; xv. 14. In Hosea xii. 1, "Ephraim feedeth on wind," it means, to strive after something vain or unprofitable; to seek that which will prove to be vain and unsatisfactory. So here it means, that in their idol service they would not obtain that which they

21. Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou *art* my servant: I have formed thee; thou *art* my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten <sup>y</sup> of me.

g ch. 49. 14, 15.

22. I have blotted out, <sup>a</sup> as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed <sup>a</sup> thee.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 103. 12. ch. 1. 18.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. 6. 20. 1 Pet. 1. 18. Rev. 5. 9.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

21. Remember these things, O Jacob;  
And Israel, for thou art my servant;  
I have formed thee, thou art my servant;  
O Israel, by me thou shalt not be forgotten.
22. I have made thy transgressions to vanish as a dense cloud,  
And thy sins as a cloud covering [the sky];  
Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.

sought. It would be like a man who sought for food, and found it to be dust or ashes; and the service of an idol compared with what man needed, or compared with the true religion, would be like ashes compared with nutritious and wholesome food. He is occupied in that which cannot sustain the soul, and which cannot save it. This graphic description of the effect of idolatry is just as true of the ways of sin, and of the pursuits of the world now. It is true of the gay and the fashionable; of those who seek happiness in riches and honours; of all those who make this world their portion, that they are feeding on ashes—they seek that which is vain, unsubstantial, unsatisfactory, and which will yet fill the soul itself with disgust and loathing. ¶ *A deceived heart hath turned him aside.* This is the true source of the difficulty; this is the fountain of idolatry, and of sin. It is, that *the heart* is deceived and deluded; and the man following its corrupt desires is turned aside, and walks in the way of folly. So with sinners always. The heart is first wrong, and then the understanding, and the whole conduct is perverted and turned aside from the path of truth and duty. Comp. Rom. i. 28. ¶ *A lie in my right hand.* The right hand is the instrument of action. A lie is a name often given to an idol as being false and delusive. The sense is, that that which they had been making, and on which

they were depending, was deceitful and vain. The work of their right hand—the fruit of their skill and toil, was deceptive, and could not save them. The doctrine is, that that which sinners make with their utmost wisdom and skill; that which they rely on to save their souls; that which has cost their highest efforts as a scheme to save them, is false and delusive. It is a *lie*, and will deceive, and cannot save them. All schemes of religion of human origin are of this description; and all will be alike deceptive and ruinous to the soul.

21. *Remember these.* Remember these things which are now said about the folly of idolatry, and the vanity of worshipping idols. Bear in mind that these cannot save, and that some better reliance than these is needed. The object of the argument is, to turn their attention to God, and to lead them to put their trust in him. ¶ *Thou art my servant, &c.* See Notes, ch. xlii. 19; xliii. 1.

22. *I have blotted out.* The word here used, *מָחָה*, *māhhā*, means, properly, to wipe off, to wipe away, and is often applied to sins, as if the account was wiped off, or, as we express it, blotted out. Ps. li. 3, 11. See Note, Isa. xliii. 25. The phrase, “to blot out sins like a cloud,” however, is unusual, and the idea not very obvious. The true idea would be expressed by rendering



23. Sing, O ye heavens; <sup>b</sup> for tains, <sup>c</sup> O forest, and every tree the LORD hath done it: shout, ye therein: for the LORD hath re- lower parts of the earth: break deemed Jacob, and glorified <sup>d</sup> him- forth into singing, ye moun- self in Israel.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 96. 11, 12. Rev. 18. 20.

<sup>c</sup> Ezek. 36. 1. &

<sup>d</sup> ch. 55. 13.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

23. Sing, O ye heavens, for JEHOVAH hath done it;  
Shout, O ye depths of the earth!  
Burst forth, ye mountains, into song!  
Thou forest, and every tree therein;  
For JEHOVAH hath redeemed Jacob,  
And glorified himself in Israel.

it. "I have made them to vanish as a thick cloud," and the sense is, as the wind drives away a thick cloud, or as it is blown off, however dark and frowning it may be, so that the sky is clear and serene, so God had caused their sins to disappear, and had removed the storm of his anger. Nothing can more strikingly represent *sin* in its nature and consequences, than a dense, dark, angry, frowning cloud, that comes over the heavens, and shuts out the sun, and fills the air with gloom; and nothing can more beautifully represent the nature and effect of pardon than the idea of removing those clouds, and leaving the sky pure, the air calm and serene, and the sun pouring down his beams of warmth and light on the earth. So the soul of the sinner is enveloped and overshadowed with a dense dark cloud; but pardon dissipates that cloud, and the soul is calm and joyful and serene. The sense here is, that as a cloud is thus entirely removed, so God had removed the remembrance of their sins, and had entirely forgiven them. ¶ *And, as a cloud.* The Chaldee renders this, "as a flying cloud." The difference between the two words here rendered, "thick cloud," and "cloud," עָבֹךְ *ābākh*, and עָנָן *ānān*, is, that the former is expressive of a cloud as *dense*, thick, compact; and the latter as *covering* or veiling the heavens. Lowth renders the latter word "vapor;" Noyes, "mist." Both words, however, usually denote a

cloud. A passage similar to this is found in Demosthenes, as quoted by Lowth. "This decree made the danger then hanging over the city pass away like a cloud." ¶ *Return unto me.* Since your sins are pardoned, and such mercy has been shown, return now, and serve me. The argument here is derived from the mercy of God in forgiving them, and the doctrine is, that the fact that God has forgiven us imposes the strongest obligations to return to him, and to devote ourselves to his service. The fact that we are redeemed and pardoned, is the highest argument why we should consecrate all our powers to the service of him who has purchased and forgiven us.

23. *Sing, O ye heavens.* See ch. xlii. 10. It is common in the sacred writings to call on the heavens, the earth, and all created things, to join in the praise of God on any great and glorious event. See Ps. xcvi. 1, 11, 12; Ps. cxlviii. The occasion of the joy here was the fact that God had redeemed his people—a fact, in the joy of which the heavens and earth and all in them were called to participate. An *apostrophe* such as the prophet here uses, is common in all writings, where inanimate objects are addressed as having life, and as capable of sharing in the emotions of the speaker. Vitringa has endeavoured to show that the various objects here enumerated are emblematic, and that by the heavens are meant the angels which are in heaven; by the lower parts of the earth,

24. Thus <sup>e</sup> saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from <sup>f</sup> the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all *things*; that

<sup>e</sup> ver. 6.

<sup>f</sup> Gal. 1. 15.

<sup>g</sup> stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

<sup>g</sup> Ps. 104. 2.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

24. Thus saith JEHOVAH, thy Redeemer,  
And he that formed thee from the womb;  
I am JEHOVAH, that formed all things  
Who stretched out the heavens alone,  
Who spread out the earth by myself:

the more humble and obscure republics of the heathen; by the mountains, the greater and more mighty kingdoms; by the forest, and the trees, large and spacious cities, with their nobles, &c. So Grotius also interprets the passage. But this interpretation is fanciful, and is not in accordance with the spirit of the passage. It is a highly-wrought expression of elevated feeling; the language of poetry, where the prophet calls on all objects to exult;—an apostrophe to the heavens and the earth—the highest heavens and the lowest part of the earth, the mountains and the forests—the most sublime objects in nature—the whole universe, to exult in the fact that the Jewish people were delivered from their long and painful captivity; their sins forgiven; and they restored again to their own land. ¶ *The LORD hath done it.* Has delivered his people from their captivity in Babylon. There is, however, no impropriety in supposing that the eye of the prophet also rested on the glorious deliverance of his people by the Messiah; and that he regarded one event as emblematic of and as introductory to the other. Numerous instances of this kind occur in Isaiah, where the eye rests on objects lying in the same *range*, and resembling one another, and where the mind of the prophet glances rapidly from the one to the other, and the object which at first suggested the description is lost sight of, and the mind fixes entirely on the more remote and glorious event. The language here used will certainly appropriately express the feelings which

should be manifested in view of the plan of redemption under the Messiah. ¶ *Shout, ye lower parts of the earth.* The foundations of the earth; the parts remote from the high heavens. Let the highest and the lowest objects shout; let the highest heavens and the depths of the earth. Grotius fancifully understands this as meaning the lowest of the people—*Plebeians*; Vitringa, the common, and humble republics of the Gentiles; Calvin, plains and valleys. “Let all regions be excited,” says he, “to celebrate the name of God.” The phrase denotes the *nethermost parts*, תַּהֲחִיטֹת, *tāhhtiyōth*, of the earth—in contrast with the lofty heavens. The LXX render it τὰ θεμέλια τῆς γῆς—the foundations of the earth. So the Chaldee. ¶ *Ye mountains.* Lofty and sublime objects in nature. They are called to exult in the general joy. So in Ps. cxlviii. 9, 13. “Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Let them praise the name of the LORD.” ¶ *O forest, and every tree therein.* Referring either to Lebanon, as being the most magnificent forest known to the prophet; or to a forest in general—to any forest, as a great and sublime object. Grotius understands it as meaning princes, the companions and attendants of kings. It is probably a mere apostrophe to the forests to exult, in accordance with the common custom among the Hebrew poets of calling on all the objects of nature to join in the general exultation and praise.

24. *Thy Redeemer.* Note, ch. xliii. 1.

25. That <sup>h</sup> frustrateth the men backward, and maketh their tokens of the liars, and maketh knowledge foolish. diviners mad; that turneth wise 26. That confirmeth <sup>1</sup> the word

¶ 2 Chron. 18. 11, 34. Jer. 50. 36. 1 Cor. 3. 19.

¶ Zech. 1. 6. ¶ Pet. 1. 19.

NEW TRANSLATION.

25. Who maketh vain the prognostics of the deceivers,  
And maketh the diviners mad;  
Who turneth the wise men back [with shame],  
And maketh their knowledge folly.
26. Who establisheth the word of his servant;  
And accomplisheth the counsel of his messengers;

¶ *And he that formed thee from the womb.* See Note on ver. 2. ¶ *That stretcheth forth the heavens.* Note, ch. xl. 22.

¶ *That spreadeth abroad the earth.* Representing the earth, as is often done in the Scriptures, as a plane. God here shows his great power; appeals to the fact that he alone had made the heavens and the earth, as the demonstration that he is able to accomplish what is here said of the deliverance of his people. The same God that made the heavens is the Redeemer and Protector of the church, and THEREFORE the church is safe.

25. *That frustrateth.* Heb., breaking; i. e., destroying, rendering vain. The idea is, that that which necromancers and diviners relied on as certain demonstration that what they predicted would be fulfilled, God makes vain and inefficacious. He interposes and destroys their plans and hopes. The event which they predicted did not follow; and all their alleged proofs that they were endowed with divine or miraculous power he rendered vain.

¶ *The tokens.* Heb., signs נִיּוֹת, נִיּוֹתוֹת. This word is usually applied to miracles, or to signs of the divine interposition and presence. Here it means the things on which diviners and soothsayers relied; the arts and acts of cunning and sleight-of-hand which they adduced as miracles, or as demonstrations that they were under a divine influence. See the word more fully explained in the Note on ch. vii. 11. ¶ *The liars.* Deceivers, boasters—meaning conjurers, or false prophets. Comp. Jer. 1. 36. See, also, Isa. xvi. 6, Note. ¶ *And maketh diviners*

*mad.* That is, makes them foolish, puts them to shame, or deprives them of wisdom. They pretend to foretell future events, but the event does not correspond with the prediction. God orders it otherwise, and thus they are shown to be foolish, or unwise; i. e., incapable of predicting future events. ¶ *That turneth wise men backward.* Lowth renders this, "who reverseth the devices of the sages." The sense is, he puts them to shame. The idea seems to be derived from the fact that when one is ashamed, or disappointed, or fails of performing what he promised, he turns away his face, or turns back. See 1 Kings ii. 16, margin. The "wise men," here denote the sages; the diviners; the soothsayers; the eastern Magi—and the sense is, that they were not able to predict future events, and that when their prediction failed they would be suffused with shame. ¶ *And maketh their knowledge foolish.* Makes it vain. He makes them appear to be fools. It is well known that soothsayers and diviners abounded in the East; and it is not improbable that the prophet here means that when Babylon was attacked by Cyrus, the diviners and soothsayers predicted his defeat, and the overthrow of his army, and the safety of the city. The prophet here says, that all such predictions would be vain; and that the result would show that they were utterly incapable of predicting a future event. The whole passage here has reference to the taking of Babylon by Cyrus, and should be interpreted accordingly.

26. *That confirmeth the word of his*

of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the <sup>1</sup> decayed places thereof:

27. That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:

## NEW TRANSLATION.

Who saith to Jerusalem, "Thou shalt be inhabited,"  
And to the cities of Judah, "Ye shall be built;  
And her desolated places will I restore."

27. Who saith to the deep, "Be dry;"  
And "I will dry up thy streams."

*servant.* Probably the word "servant," here, is to be taken in a *collective* sense, as referring to the prophets in general, or the group or series of prophets who had foretold the return of the Jews to their own land, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Or it may be, that the prophet refers more particularly to himself, as having made a full prediction of this event. The parallel expression, "his messengers," however, is in the plural number, and thus it is rendered probable that the word here refers to the prophets collectively. The idea is, that it was a characteristic of God to establish the words of his servants the prophets, and that their predictions in regard to the return from the captivity in a special manner should be fulfilled. ¶ *The counsel of his messengers.* The prophets whom he had sent to announce future events, and to give counsel and consolation to the nation. ¶ *That saith to Jerusalem, &c.* By his prophets. Jerusalem is here supposed to be lying in ruins, and the people to be in captivity in Babylon. In this situation, God is represented as addressing desolate Jerusalem, and saying, that it should be again inhabited, and that the cities of Judah should be rebuilt. ¶ *The decayed places.* I will restore her desolate places, the places throughout the land that have been overthrown, and where ruin has spread. The whole land is represented as lying in ruins, and yet those ruins should be built again. Margin, "wastes." No land, probably, was ever more completely desolated than the

land of Judea, when its inhabitants were carried to Babylon.

27. *That saith to the deep, Be dry.* Lowth supposes that this refers to the fact that Cyrus took Babylon by diverting from their course the waters of the river Euphrates, and thus leaving the bed of the river dry, so that he could march his army under the walls of the city. See Note on ch. xiii. 14. With this interpretation, also, Vitringa, J. H. Michaëlis, Grotius, Rosenmüller, and some others, accord. Gesenius supposes that it is a description of the power of God in general; and some others have referred it to the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea, when the Hebrews came out of Egypt, as in ch. xliii. 16, 17. The most obvious interpretation is that of Lowth, Vitringa, &c., by which it is supposed that it refers to the drying up of the Euphrates, and the streams about Babylon, when Cyrus took the city. The principal reasons for this interpretation are, (1) that the entire statement in these verses has reference to the events connected with the taking of Babylon, and the deliverance of the Jewish people; (2) that it is strikingly descriptive of the manner in which the city was taken by Cyrus; and (3) that Cyrus is expressly mentioned (ver. 28) as being concerned in the transaction here referred to. The word rendered "deep," תְּהוֹם, *tzulāh*, denotes, properly, anything *sunk*; the depth of the sea; an *abyss*. But it may be applied to a deep river, and especially

28. That saith of Cyrus, *He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to* Jerusalem, Thou shalt be <sup>k</sup> built; and to the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid.

<sup>k</sup> Ezra i. 1, &c.

NEW TRANSLATION.

28. Who saith of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd, And he shall perform all my pleasure;"  
And who saith of Jerusalem, "Thou shalt be built;"  
And of the temple, "Thy foundation shall be laid."

to the Euphrates, as a deep and mighty stream. In Jer. li. 36, the word "sea" is applied to the Euphrates:

"I will dry up her sea,  
And make her springs dry."

Cyrus took the city of Babylon, after having besieged it a long time in vain, by turning the waters of the river into a vast lake, forty miles square, which had been constructed in order to carry off the superfluous waters in a time of inundation. By doing this, he laid the channel of the river almost dry, and was thus enabled to enter the city above and below, under the walls, and to take it by surprise. The LXX render the word *deep* here by *abyss*, ἀβύσσος. The Chaldee, "who says to Babylon, be desolate, and I will dry up your streams." ¶ *I will dry up thy rivers.* Referring, doubtless, to the numerous canals, or artificial streams, by which Babylon and the adjacent country were watered. These were supplied from the Euphrates, and when that was diverted from its usual bed, of course they became dry.

28. *That saith of Cyrus.* This is the first time in which Cyrus is expressly named by Isaiah, though he is often referred to. He is mentioned by him only in one other place expressly by name. Isa. xlv. 1. He is several times mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23; Ezra i. 1, 2, 7; iii. 7; iv. 3, 5; v. 13, 17; Dan. i. 21; vi. 28; x. 1. He began his reign about 550 years before Christ, and this prophecy was therefore delivered not far from a hundred and fifty years before. None but God himself, or he whom God inspired, could have mentioned so long before, *the name of him*

who should deliver the Jewish people from bondage. And if this was delivered, therefore, by Isaiah, it proves that he was under divine inspiration. The name of Cyrus, *کورس*, *Koresch*; Gr., *Κῦρος*, the Greek writers say, means the sun. It is contracted from the Persian word, *khorschid*, which in that language means the son. Cyrus was the celebrated king of the Medes and Persians, and was the son of Cambyses, the Persian, and of Mandane, daughter of Astyages, king of the Medes. For an account of his character and reign, see the Note on ch. xli. 2, where I have anticipated all that is needful to be said here. ¶ *He is my shepherd.* A shepherd is one who leads and guides a flock, and then the word denotes, by a natural and easy metaphor, a ruler, or leader of a people, a king or governor. Thus, the name is given to Moses in Isa. lxiii. 11. Comp. Ps. lxxvii. 20; and Ezek. xxxiv. 23. The name here is given to Cyrus, because God would employ him to conduct, by his direction, his people again to their own land. The word "my" implies that he was under the direction of God, and was employed in his service. ¶ *And shall perform all my pleasure.* In destroying the city and kingdom of Babylon; in delivering the Jewish captives; and in rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple. ¶ *Even saying to Jerusalem.* That is, I say to Jerusalem. The Vulgate and the LXX render this as meaning God, and not Cyrus, and doubtless this is the true construction. It was one of the things which God would do, to say to Jerusalem that it should be rebuilt. ¶ *Thou shalt be built.* Thou shalt be rebuilt;

thy walls and dwellings shall be restored. ¶ *And to the temple, &c.* Though now desolate and in ruins, yet it shall be reconstructed, and its foundation shall be firmly laid. The phrase, "to Jerusalem," and "to the temple," should be rendered "of," in accordance with a common signification of the preposition, *ל*, *lāmēdh*, and as it is rendered in the former part of the verse when speaking of Cyrus. Comp. Gen. xx. 13; Judges ix. 54. It was, indeed, under the direction of Cyrus, that the city of Jerusalem was rebuilt, and the temple was reconstructed, (Ezra i. 1,) but still it was to be traced to God, who directed it, and who raised him up for this purpose. That this passage was seen by Cyrus is the testimony of Josephus, and is morally certain from the nature of the case, since otherwise it is incredible that he should have aided the Jews in returning to their own land, and in rebuilding their city and temple. See Introduction to Isaiah, § 2. This is one of the numerous instances in the Bible, in which God claims control and jurisdiction even over heathen princes and monarchs, and in which he says that their plans are under his direction, and made subservient to his will. It is one of the proofs that God presides over all; that he rules everywhere on earth; and that he makes the voluntary purposes of men subservient to him, and a part of the means of executing his good and glorious designs in relation to his people. Indeed, all the proud monarchs and conquerors of the earth have been, in some sense, instruments in his hand of accomplishing his plans and executing his pleasure.

## CHAPTER XLV.

### ANALYSIS.

This is a continuation of the previous chapter, and the subject which was introduced there (ch. xlv. 28) constitutes the main topic of this. In the close of the previous chapter, God had introduced the name of Cyrus as he who was to deliver his people from their captivity, and to restore them to their

own land. This chapter is almost entirely occupied with a full statement of what he would accomplish, and of the deliverance which would be effected through him—with an occasional reference to the more important deliverance which would be effected under the Messiah, and the effect of his coming. *The general subject of the chapter is the overthrow of Babylon, the deliverance of the Jews by Cyrus, and the events consequent on that adapted to give consolation to the friends of God, particularly the future conversion of the Gentiles to the true religion.* ver. 14—26. This general purpose may be stated in a few particulars.

I. An apostrophe to Cyrus stating the design for which God had raised him up and what he would do for him. v. 1—8. This statement also comprises several items.

(a) God would subdue nations before him, and open brazen gates, and give him the treasures of kings, and remove every obstacle to his taking Babylon. v. 1—3.

(b) The design for which God would do this, would be that he might deliver his people, and that the world might know by an event so great and wonderful that JEHOVAH, who had thus raised him up to deliver his own people, was the true and only God. v. 4—7.

(c) The joyful consequences of this event—so great that the heavens are represented as dropping down righteousness, and the earth as bringing forth salvation in consequence of it. ver. 8.

II. Those who strive with their Maker are reproved and rebuked. vs. 9, 10. This is probably designed to apply to the people of Babylon, or to complainers in general in regard to the government of God.

III. God vindicates himself against the calumnies and objections of his enemies, and states the evidence that he is God, and the consequence of his interposition in raising up Cyrus.

(a) He condescends to reason with men on the subject, and is willing to be inquired of respecting future events. ver. 2.

(b) He had made the earth and all

## CHAPTER XLV.

1. Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I<sup>1</sup> have holden, to subdue

<sup>1</sup> or, strengthened.

nations before him; and I will loose<sup>a</sup> the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut:

<sup>a</sup> Dan. 5. 6, 30.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

1. Thus saith JEHOVAH to his anointed,  
To Cyrus, whom I hold by the right hand,  
To subdue the nations before him,  
And to ungird the loins of kings;  
To open before him the folding-doors,  
And the gates shall not be shut.

things, and had raised up Cyrus for the purpose of delivering his people. vs. 12, 13.

(c) He states the consequence of his raising up Cyrus, and of their deliverance, for the purpose of comforting his people. ver. 14.

(d) All the worshippers of idols should be ashamed and confounded. vs. 15, 16.

(e) Israel, however, should be saved. They who put their trust in God should never be confounded. ver. 17.

IV. God vindicates his own character; and calls on the nations of idolaters to come and compare the claims of idols with him, and especially appeals in proof that he is God to his power of predicting future events. vs. 18—21.

V. The chapter closes by a call on all nations to trust in him in view of the fact that he is the only true God, and that the idols are vain; and with an assurance that all *should* yet trust in him, and that the true religion should yet spread over the world. vs. 22—25. This is designed further to comfort the people of God in their exile, and is a striking prophecy of the final universal prevalence of the gospel.

1. Thus saith the LORD to his anointed. This is a direct apostrophe to Cyrus, though it was uttered not less than one hundred and fifty years before Babylon was taken by Cyrus. The word "anointed" is that which is usually rendered Messiah (מָשִׁיחַ), and

is here rendered by the LXX, τῷ χριστῷ μου Κύρω, to Cyrus my Christ, i. e., my anointed. It probably means the anointed, and was a title which was commonly given to the kings of Israel because they were set apart to their office by the ceremony of anointing, and hence they were called οἱ χριστοὶ κυρίου — the anointed of the Lord, as being consecrated by anointing, and therefore holy. 1 Sam. ii. 10, 35; xii. 3, 5; xvi. 6; xxiv. 7, 11; xxvi. 9, 11, 23; 2 Sam. i. 14, 16; xix. 22, 23. There is no evidence that the Persian kings were inaugurated or consecrated by oil, but this is an appellation which was common among the Jews, and is applied to Cyrus in accordance with their usual mode of designating kings. It means here, that God had solemnly set apart Cyrus to perform an important public service in his cause; that he had made him king, and had raised him up to accomplish his own purposes. It does not mean that Cyrus was a man of piety, or a worshipper of the true God, of which there is no certain evidence, but that his appointment as king was owing to the arrangement of God's providence, and that he was to be employed in accomplishing his purposes. The title here does not designate holiness of character, but appointment to an office. ¶ Whose right hand I have holden. Marg., "strengthened." Lowth, "whom I hold fast by the right hand." The idea seems to be, that God had upheld, sustained, strengthened him—

as we do one who is feeble, or in danger, by taking his right hand. See Note, ch. xli. 13; xlii. 6. ¶ *To subdue nations before him.* For a general account of the conquest of Cyrus, see Note on ch. xli. 2. It may be added here, that "besides his native subjects, the nations which Cyrus subdued and over which he reigned, were the Cilicians, Syrians, Paphlagonians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, Lydians, Carians, Phœnicians, Arabians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Bactrians, Saces and Maryandines. Xenophon describes his empire as extending from the Mediterranean and Egypt to the Indian Ocean, and from Ethiopia to the Euxine Sea, and conveys a physical idea of its extent by observing that the extremities were difficult to inhabit from opposite causes—some from excess of heat, and others from excess of cold; some from a scarcity of water, and others from too great abundance." *Pictorial Bible.*

¶ *And I will loose the loins of kings.* The ancients dressed in a large, loose, flowing robe thrown over an under garment or tunic, which was shaped to the body. The outer robe was girded with a sash about the loins when they toiled, or labored, or went to war, or ran. Hence, "to gird up the loins" is indicative of preparation for a journey, for labor, or for war, and is expressive of preparedness for battle, or for any service. To *unloose* the girdle, or the loins, was indicative of a state of rest, or repose, or want of preparation, or feebleness; and the phrase here means that God would so order it in his Providence that the kings should be unprepared to meet him, or should be so feeble that they would not be able to resist him. Comp. Job xxxviii. 3; Jer. i. 17. See also Job xii. 21:

He poureth contempt upon princes,  
And weakeneth the strength of the mighty;  
in the margin more correctly, "looseth the girdle of the strong." Or it may mean that the loins were regarded as the seat of strength (Job xl. 16); and that to loose the loins is the same as to enervate them, or to make them feeble. I prefer the former interpretation; but the general sense is the same, that the

kings would be unable to oppose and resist Cyrus in his conquests. There was a *literal* fulfilment of this in regard to Belshazzar, king of Babylon, when the city was taken by Cyrus. When the hand came forth on the wall of his palace, and the mysterious finger wrote his condemnation, it is said, "Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against the other." Dan. v. 6. The Vulgate renders this, "I will turn the backs of kings." ¶ *To open before him the two leaved gates.* The folding gates of a city, or a palace. It so happened in the scene of revelry which prevailed in Babylon when Cyrus took the city, that the gates within the city which led from the streets to the river were left open, or the city could not have been taken even after Cyrus had got within the walls. For the city was not only *inclosed* with walls, but there were walls within the city on each side of the river Euphrates with gates, by which the inhabitants had access to the water of the river. Had not these gates been left open on that occasion, contrary to the usual custom, the Persians would have been shut up in the bed of the river, and could all have been destroyed. It also so happened in the revelry of that night, that the gates of the palace were left open, so that there was access to every part of the city. Herodotus says (Book i. § 191): "If the besieged had been aware of the designs of Cyrus, or had discovered the project before its actual accomplishment, they might have effected the total destruction of these troops. They had only to secure the little gates which led to the river, and to have manned the embankments on either side, and they might have inclosed the Persians in a net from which they could never have escaped; as it happened they were taken by surprise; and such is the extent of that city, that, as the inhabitants themselves affirm, they who lived in the extremities were made prisoners before the alarm was communicated to the centre of the palace." ¶ *And the gates shall not be*



2. I will go before thee, and of brass, and cut in sunder the  
make the crooked places straight: bars of iron:  
I will break <sup>b</sup> in pieces the gates |

3 Ps. 107. 16.

NEW TRANSLATION.

2. I will go before thee,  
And make the high places level;  
The gates of brass I will break in pieces,  
And the bars of iron I will cut in sunder.

*shut.* This is a most remarkable prophecy, and its fulfilment was remarkable. It was usual to close the gates of a city at night, and on the approach of an enemy. But in regard to Babylon, the *inner* gates leading to the river were left open in the revelry which prevailed in the city, and Cyrus had unarrested and unopposed access even to the palace itself. None but an omniscient Being could have predicted, a hundred and fifty years before it occurred, that such an event would take place; and this is one of the many prophecies which demonstrate in the most particular manner that Isaiah was inspired.

2. *I will go before thee.* To prepare the way for conquest—a proof that it is by the Providence of God that the affairs of nations are arranged, and that the proud conquerors of the earth are enabled to triumph. The idea is, I will take away everything that would retard or oppose your victorious march. ¶ *And make the crooked places straight.* See Note, ch. xl. 4. The Chaldee renders this, “my word shall go before thee, and I will prostrate the walls,” &c. Lowth renders it, “and make the mountains plain;” Noyes, “and make the high places plain.” The LXX render it *καὶ ὅρη ὀμαλίσω*, “and level mountains,”—the Vulgate, *et gloriosos terras humiliabo*—and the high places of the earth I will bring down. The word *הַדְחִירִם*, *hadhūrīm*, is from *הָדַר*, *hādhār*, to be large, ample, swollen, tumid; and probably means the swollen, tumid places, i. e., the hills, or elevated places; and the idea is, that God would make them level; that is, he would re-

move all obstructions out of his way. ¶ *I will break in pieces the gates of brass.* Ancient cities were surrounded by walls, and secured by strong gates, which were not unfrequently made of brass. To Babylon there were one hundred gates, twenty-five on each side of the city, which with their posts were made of brass. “In the circumference of the walls,” says Herodotus, Book 1, § 179, “at different distances, were a hundred massy gates of brass, whose hinges and frames were of the same metal.” It was to this, doubtless, that the passage before us refers. ¶ *The bars of iron.* With which the gates of the city were fastened. “One method of securing the gates of fortified places among the ancients, was to cover them with thick plates of iron, a custom which is still used in the East, and seems to be of great antiquity. We learn from Pitts, that Algiers has five gates, and some of these have two, some three other gates within them, and some of them plated all over with iron. Pococke speaking of a bridge near Antioch, called the iron bridge, says, that there are two towers belonging to it, the gates of which are covered with iron plates. Some of these gates are plated over with brass; such are the enormous gates of the principal mosque at Damascus, formerly the church of John the Baptist.” *Paxton.* The general idea in these passages is, that God had raised up Cyrus; that he would go before him; that Cyrus would owe his success to the interposition of God, and that that interposition would be so striking that it would be manifest that he owed his success to the favor of heaven. This was so clear in the history of Cyrus

3. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which <sup>c</sup> call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

c ch. 48. 15.

NEW TRANSLATION.

3. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness,  
And the hidden wealth of secret places,  
That thou mayest know that I am JEHOVAH,  
Who calleth thee by thy name; the God of Israel.

that it is recognised by himself, and was also recognised even by the heathen who witnessed the success of his arms. Thus Cyrus says, (Ezra i. 2,) "JEHOVAH, God of heaven, hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth." Thus Herodotus records the fact that Harpagus said in a letter to Cyrus, "Son of Cambyses, Heaven evidently favors you, or you could never have thus risen superior to fortune." Herod. B. 1, § 124. So Herodotus says that Cyrus regarded himself as endowed with powers more than human. "When he considered the peculiar circumstances of his birth, he believed himself more than human. He reflected also on the prosperity of his arms, and that wherever he had extended his excursions, he had been followed by success and victory." Herod. B. 1, § 205.

3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness. The secret, concealed treasures; the treasures which kings have amassed, and which they have laid up in dark and secure places. The word "darkness," here means that which was hidden, unknown, secret. Comp. Job xii. 22. The treasures of the kings of the East were usually hidden in some obscure and strong place, and were not to be touched except in cases of pressing necessity. Alexander found vast quantities of treasure thus hidden among the Persians; and it was by taking such treasures that the rapacity of the soldiers who followed a conqueror was satisfied, and in fact by a division of the spoils thus taken that they were paid. There can be no doubt that large quantities of treasure in this manner would be found in Babylon. ¶ And hidden riches of secret places. Wealth, or treasure de-

posited for safe keeping in hidden places, in caves, or in vaults cut from the rock. The following observations from Harmer will show that it was common to conceal treasures in this manner in the East: "We are told by travellers into the East, that they have met with great difficulties, very often from a notion universally disseminated among them, that all Europeans are magicians, and that their visits to those eastern countries are not to satisfy curiosity, but to find out and get possession of those vast treasures they believe to be buried there in great quantities. These representations are very common; but Sir J. Chardin gives us a more particular and amusing account of affairs of this kind: 'It is common in the Indies, for those sorcerers that accompany conquerors, every where to point out the place where treasures are hid. Thus, at Surat, when Siragi came thither, there were people who, with a stick striking on the ground or against walls, found out those that had been hollowed or dug up, and ordered such places to be opened.' He then intimates that something of this nature had happened to him in Mingrelia. Among the various contradictions that agitate the human breast, this appears to be a remarkable one; they firmly believe the power of magicians to discover hidden treasures, and yet they continue to hide them. Dr. Perry has given us an account of some mighty treasures hidden in the ground by some of the principal people of the Turkish empire, which, upon a revolution, were discovered by domestics privy to the secret. D'Herbelot has given us accounts of treasures concealed in the same manner, some of them of great princes,

discovered by accidents extremely remarkable; but this account of Chardin's of conquerors pretending to find out hidden treasures, by means of sorcerers, is very extraordinary. As, however, people of this cast have made great pretences to mighty things, in all ages, and were not unfrequently confided in by princes, there is reason to believe they pretended sometimes, by their art, to discover treasures, anciently, to princes, of which they had gained intelligence by other methods; and, as God opposed his prophets, at various times, to pretended sorcerers, it is not unlikely that the prophet Isaiah points at some such prophetic discoveries, in those remarkable words, Isa. xlv. 3: 'And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.' I will give them, by enabling some prophet of mine to tell thee where they are concealed. Such a supposition throws a great energy into those words." Obs. 111. 511—513. The belief that the ruins of cities abound with treasures that were deposited there long since, prevails in the East, and the inhabitants of those countries regard all travellers who come there, Burckhardt informs us, as coming to find treasures, and as having power to remove them by enchantment. "It is very unfortunate," says he, "for European travellers that the idea of treasures being hidden in ancient edifices is so strongly rooted in the minds of the Arabs and Turks; they believe that it is sufficient for a true magician to have seen and observed the spot where treasures are hidden, (of which he is supposed to be already informed by the old books of the infidels who lived on the spot,) in order to be able afterwards at his ease to command the guardian of the treasure to set the whole before him. It was of no avail to tell them to follow me, and see whether I searched for money. Their reply was, 'Of course you will not dare to take it out before us, but we know that if you are a skilful magician you will order it to follow you through the air to whatever place you please.'

If the traveller takes the dimensions of a building or a column, they are persuaded it is a magical proceeding." Travels in Syria, pp. 428, 429, Ed. Lond. 4to. 1822. Laborde, in his account of a visit to Petra, or Sela, has given an account of a splendid temple cut in the solid rock which is called the Khasné, or "treasury of Pharaoh." It is sculptured out of an enormous block of freestone, and is one of the most splendid remains of antiquity. It is believed by the Arabs to have been the place where Pharaoh, supposed to have been the founder of the costly edifices of Petra, had deposited his wealth. "After having searched in vain," says Laborde, "all the coffins and funeral monuments, to find his wealth, they supposed it must be in the urn which surmounted the Khasné. But, unhappily, being out of their reach, it has only served the more to kindle their desires. Hence, whenever they pass through the ravine, they stop for a moment, charge their guns, aim at the urn, and endeavor by firing at it, to break off some fragments, with a view to demolish it altogether, and get at the treasure which it is supposed to contain." Laborde's Mt. Sinai and Petra, p. 170, Ed. Lond. 1836. The treasures which Cyrus obtained in his conquests are known to have been immense. Sardis, the capital of Cræsus, king of Lydia, the most wealthy monarch of his time, was, according to Herodotus, given up to be plundered, (Herod. B. 1, § 84;) and his hoarded wealth became the spoil of the victor. See also Xen. Cyro. B. vii. That Babylon abounded in treasures no one can doubt, and it is expressly declared by Jeremiah that it was distinguished for wealth. See Jer. li. 13: "O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures." These treasures, also, according to Jeremiah, became the spoil of the conqueror of the city. Jer. l. 37. Pliny also has given a description of the wealth which Cyrus obtained in his conquests, which strikingly confirms what Isaiah here declares: "Cyrus in the conquest of Asia obtained thirty-four thousand pounds weight of gold, besides golden vases,

4. For Jacob my servant's have surnamed thee, though thou sake, and Israel mine elect, I have hast not known me. even called thee by thy name: I

## NEW TRANSLATION.

4. For the sake of Jacob, my servant,  
And Israel my chosen,  
And I have called thee by thy name,  
I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

and gold that was wrought with leaves, and the palm-tree, and the vine. In which victory also he obtained five hundred thousand talents of silver, and the goblet of Semiramis, which weighed fifteen talents." Nat. His. 33, c. 3. Brereword has estimated that this gold and silver amounted to one hundred and twenty-six millions, and two hundred and twenty-four thousand pounds sterling. De Pon. et Men. cap. 10. Babylon was the centre of an immense traffic that was carried on between the eastern parts of Asia and the western parts of Asia and Europe. For a description of this commerce, see an article in the Biblical Repository, vol. vii. pp. 364—390. Babylonian garments, it will be remembered, of great value, had made their way to Palestine in the time of Joshua. Josh. vii. 21. Tapestries embroidered with figures of griffins and other monsters of eastern imagination were articles of export. Isaac Voss. Observat. Carpets were wrought there of the finest materials and workmanship, and formed an article of extensive exportation. They were of high repute in the times of Cyrus; whose tomb at Pasargada was adorned with them. Arrian, Exped. Alex. vi. 29. Great quantities of gold were used in Babylon. The vast image of gold erected by Nebuchadnezzar in the plain of Dura is proof enough of this fact. The image was sixty cubits high and six broad. Dan. iii. 1. Herodotus informs us that the Chaldeans used a thousand talents of frankincense annually in the temple of Jupiter. Another proof of great wealth. Herod. 1, 183. ¶ *That thou mayest know, &c.* That from these signal successes, and

these favors of heaven, you may learn that JEHOVAH is the true God. This he would learn because he would see that he owed it to heaven, (see Note on ver. 2;) and because the prediction which God had made of his success would convince him that JEHOVAH was the true and only God. That it had this effect on Cyrus is apparent from his own proclamation. See Ezra i. 2. God took this method of making himself known to the monarch of the most mighty kingdom of the earth, in order, as he repeatedly declares, that through his dealings with kingdoms and men he may be acknowledged. ¶ *Which call thee by thy name.* See Note, ch. xliii. 1. That thou mayest know that I, who so long before designated thee by name, am the true God. The argument is, that none but God could have foretold the name of him who should be the conqueror of Babylon, and the deliverer of his people. ¶ *Am the God of Israel.* That the God of Israel was the true and only God. The point to be made known was not that he was the God of Israel, but that the God of Israel was JEHOVAH the true God.

4. *For Jacob my servant's sake.* See Note, ch. xlii. 19. The statement here is, that God had raised up and sustained Cyrus on account of his own people, and to effect their deliverance. The sentiment is common in the Bible, that kings and nations are in the hand of God; and that he overrules and directs their actions for the accomplishment of his own purposes, and especially to advance the interests of his cause, and to protect, defend, and deliver his people. See ch. x. 5. Note. Comp. ch. xlvii. 6. ¶ *I have even called thee by thy name.*

5. I <sup>d</sup> *am* the LORD, and <sup>e</sup> *there* is none else, *there is* no God beside me: I girded thee, <sup>f</sup> though thou hast not known me:

<sup>d</sup> Deut. 4. 35, 39.

<sup>e</sup> ver. 14, 18, 22.

<sup>f</sup> Ps. 18. 32, 39.

6. That <sup>g</sup> they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none beside me. I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else.

<sup>g</sup> 20. Mal. 1. 11.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

5. I am JEHOVAH, and there is none else;

Beside me there is no God.

I have girded thee, though thou hast not known me;

6. That they may know from the rising of the sun,  
And from the west, that there is none beside me.

I am JEHOVAH, and there is none else;

I have designated thee as the leader of armies, and to accomplish my purposes in regard to Babylon. He had, by the prophet, mentioned and recorded his name a hundred and fifty years before he was thus successful in his conquests. ¶ *I have surnamed thee.* On the meaning of the word "surname," see Note, ch. xlv. 5. The word, according to Gesenius and Rosenmüller, means, to name in a kind, affectionate, and flattering manner, or to name as a friend. It has this meaning in Arabic, and this sense of the word occurs in Job xxxii. 21. According to this, it means, that God had addressed him in a kind and friendly manner; he had distinguished and honored him; he had purposed to employ him in his service; he had conferred on him titles of distinction. The reference is to the fact that he had appointed him to accomplish important purposes, and had designated him as his "shepherd," ch. xlv. 28, and his "anointed," ch. xlv. 1. ¶ *Though thou hast not known me.* Before he was called to accomplish these important services he was a stranger to JEHOVAH, and it was only when he should have been so signally favored of heaven, and should be made acquainted with the divine will in regard to the deliverance of his people and the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra i. 1—3), that he would be acquainted with the true God. The idea is, that he was a stranger to the true God, and was an idolater.

5. I am the LORD, &c. See Notes,

ch. xlii. 8; xliii. 3, 11; xlv. 8; and vs. 14, 18, 22, of this chapter. To spread abroad this great truth was the purpose of raising up Cyrus, and this was to be done by placing him at the head of empire on earth, and subduing nations under him, and by a course of events which should convince him that JEHOVAH was the true God, and lead him to make proclamation of that glorious truth. ¶ *I girded thee, &c.* See Note on ver. 1. The sense is, I girded thee with the girdle—the military belt; I prepared thee, and strengthened thee for war and conquest; and I have sustained thee. Even men who are strangers to the true God are thus girded for their exploits, and receive their strength from God. They are sustained by him, and are unable to accomplish anything without his providential aid.

6. *That they may know.* That the people or the nations may know. ¶ *From the rising of the sun, and from the west.* From all parts of the world. The phrase is evidently here used to designate the whole world. Through the conquests and the proclamation of Cyrus this great truth would be extensively known in those regions. Kimchi says, that the reason why the north and the south are not mentioned here is, that the earth from the east to the west is perfectly inhabitable, but not so from the north to the south. That this was accomplished, see Ezra i. 1, seq. Cyrus made public proclamation that JEHOVAH had given him all the kingdoms of the earth,

7. I <sup>b</sup> form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, <sup>i</sup> and create <sup>k</sup> evil. I the LORD do all these *things*.

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 1. 4.

<sup>i</sup> Ps. 29. 11.

<sup>k</sup> Amos 3. 6.

NEW TRANSLATION.

7. Forming light, and creating darkness;  
Making peace, and creating evil.  
I JEHOVAH do all these.

and had commanded him to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. The purpose of all this arrangement was, to secure the propagation and acknowledgment of the truth that JEHOVAH was the only true God, as extensively as possible. Nothing could be better adapted to this than the actual course of events. For (1) the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar was an event which would be extensively known throughout the pagan world. (2) Babylon was then the magnificent capital of the heathen world, and the kingdom, of which it was the centre, was the most mighty kingdom of the earth. (3) The fact of the conquest of Babylon, and the manner in which it was done, would be known all over that empire, and would attract universal attention. Nothing had ever occurred more remarkable; nothing more fitted to excite the wonder of mankind. (4) The hand of JEHOVAH was so manifest in this, and the prophecies which had been uttered were so distinctly fulfilled, that Cyrus himself acknowledged that it was of JEHOVAH. The existence, the name, and the truth of JEHOVAH, became known as far as the name and exploits of Cyrus, and there was a public recognition of the true God by him who had conquered the most mighty capital of the world, and whose opinions and laws were to enter into the constitution of the Medio-Persian empire that was to succeed.

7. *I form the light, and create darkness.* Light, in the Bible, is the emblem of knowledge, innocence, pure religion, and of prosperity in general; and darkness is the emblem of the opposite. Light here seems to be the emblem of peace and prosperity, and darkness the emblem of adversity; and the sentiment of the verse is, that all things prosperous

and adverse are under the providential control and direction of God. Of *light*, it is literally true that God made it, and emblematically true that he is the source of knowledge, prosperity, joy, happiness, and pure religion. Of *darkness*, it is literally true also that the night is formed by him; that he withdraws the light of the sun, and leaves the earth enveloped in gloomy shades. It is emblematically true also that calamity, ignorance, disappointment, and want of success, are ordered by him; and not less true that all the moral darkness, or evil, that prevails on earth, is under the direction and ordering of his Providence. There is no reason to think, however, that the words "darkness" and "evil" are to be understood here as referring to moral darkness, or evil; that is, *sin*. A strict regard should be had to the connexion in the interpretation of such passages; and the connexion here does not demand such an interpretation. The main subject here is, *the prosperity which should attend the arms of Cyrus, the consequent reverses and calamities of the nations whom he would subdue, and the proof thence furnished that JEHOVAH was the true God*; and the passage should be limited in the interpretation to this design. The statement then is, that all this was under his direction. It was not the work of chance, or hap-hazard. It was not accomplished or caused by idols. It was not originated by any inferior or subordinate cause. It was to be traced at once, and entirely to God. The success of arms, and the blessings of peace were to be traced to him; and the reverses of arms, and the calamities of war to him also. He was to be recognised as presiding over, and as directing all; and in all these events there was proof that

8. Drop <sup>1</sup> down, ye heavens, | from above, and let the skies pour  
 | Ps. 85. 11. | down righteousness: let the earth

## NEW TRANSLATION.

8. Ye heavens, pour down from above;  
 Ye clouds distil righteousness;

he only was God. This is all that the connexion of the passage demands; and this is in accordance with the interpretation of Kimchi, Jerome, Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Calvin, and Grotius. The comment of Grotius is, "Giving safety to the people, as the Persians; sending calamities upon the people, as upon the Medes and Babylonians." Lowth, Jerome, Vitringa, Jahn, and some others, suppose that there is reference here to the prevalent doctrine among the Persians, and the followers of the Magian religion in general, which prevailed all over the east, and in which Cyrus was probably educated, that there are two supreme, independent, co-existent, and eternal causes always acting in opposition to each other; that the one is the author of all good, and the other of all evil; and that these principles or causes are constantly struggling with each other. The good being, or principle, they call light; and the evil, darkness; or the one, Oromasden, and the other, Ahrimanen. It was farther the doctrine of the Magians that when the good principle had the ascendancy in our world, happiness prevailed; and when the evil principle prevailed, misery abounded. Lowth supposes, that God here means to assert his complete and absolute superiority over all other things or principles; and that all those powers whom the Persians supposed to be the original authors of good and evil to mankind were subordinate, and must be subject to him; and that there is no power that is not subservient to him, and under his control. That these opinions prevailed in very early times, and perhaps as early as Isaiah, there seems no good reason to doubt. Hyde, de relig. Veter. Persar. cap. xxii. But there is no good evidence that Isaiah here referred to those opinions. Good and evil; prosperity and adversity

abound in the world at all times; and all that is required in order to a correct understanding of this passage, is the general statement that God presides over all, and that all these things are under his providential direction; that he is the giver of prosperity, and that he presides over, and directs in times of adversity. ¶ *I make peace.* I am the author of peace among the nations; I hush the contending passions of men, and control them; I dispose to peace, and prevent wars when I choose—a passage which proves that the most violent passions of men are under his control. No passions are more uncontrollable than those which lead to wars; and nowhere is there a more striking display of the Omnipotence of God than in his power to hush to peace those contending passions, and repress the pride, and ambition, and spirit of revenge of conquerors and kings.

Which stilleth the noise of the seas,  
 The noise of their waves,  
 And the tumult of the people.

Ps. lxx. 7.

¶ *And create evil.* The parallelism here shows that this is not to be understood in the sense of *all* evil, but of that which is the opposite of peace and prosperity. That is, God directs judgments, disappointments, trials, and calamities; he has power to suffer the mad passions of men to rage, and to afflict nations with war; he presides over adverse as well as prosperous events. The passage does not prove that God is the author of moral evil, or sin, and such a sentiment is abhorrent to the general strain of the Bible, and to all just views of the character of a holy God. ¶ *I, the LORD, do all these* I preside over, and direct all these events. None of them are ordered by idol gods; none of them take place without my permission and control.

8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above,

open, and let them bring forth spring up together; I the LORD salvation, and <sup>m</sup> let righteousness have created it.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

Let the earth open and let them bring forth salvation,  
And righteousness spring up at the same time;  
I JEHOVAH have created it.

That is, as a result or effect of the benefits that shall follow from the rescue of the people from their captivity and exile. The mind of the prophet is carried forward to future times, and he sees results from that interposition, as striking as if the heavens should distil righteousness; and sees the prevalence of piety and happiness, as if they should spring out of the earth. It may be designed primarily to denote the happy results of their return to their own land, and the peace and prosperity which would ensue. But there is a beauty and elevation in the language, which is more applicable to the future entire prevalence of religion on the earth—the more remote and distant consequences of their return—the coming and reign of the Messiah. The figure is a beautiful one. It is that of the rain and dew descending from heaven, and watering the earth, and producing fertility and beauty; and the idea is, that piety and peace would prevail in a manner resembling the verdure of the fields under the rains and dews of heaven. A figure remarkably similar to this is employed by the Psalmist:—

Truth shall spring out of the earth;  
And righteousness shall look down from heaven.  
Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good;  
And our land shall yield her increase.

Ps. lxxxv. 11, 12.

The phrase, "drop down, ye heavens, from above," means, pour forth, or distil, as the clouds distil, or drop down the rain or dew. Ps. lxxv. 12, 13. It is appropriately applied to rain or dew, and here means that righteousness would be as abundant as if poured down like dews or showers from heaven. The LXX, however, render it, "Let the heavens above be glad," but evidently erroneously. ¶ *And let the skies.* Or rather the clouds. The word here used,

*shshhāqim*, is derived from the verb *prp*, *shshhāq*, to rub, pound fine, or beat in pieces; and is then applied to dust (see ch. xl. 15); and to a cloud; or thin cloud; or cloud of dust; and then to clouds in general. Job xxxvii. 18; xxxviii. 37; xxxvi. 28. The sense here is, that righteousness should be poured down like rain from the clouds of heaven; that is, it should be abundant, and should prevail on the earth. ¶ *Pour down righteousness.* Or distil like the dew. Righteousness shall abound as if it distilled like dews, or gentle rains from the clouds. The result of the deliverance from the captivity shall be, that righteousness shall be abundant. During the captivity they had been far away from their native land; the temple was destroyed; the fire had ceased to burn on the altars; and the praises of God had ceased to be celebrated in his courts; and all the means by which piety had been nourished and cherished had been withdrawn. This state of things was strikingly similar to the earth when the heavens are shut up, and the rain is withheld, and all verdure droops and dies. But after the return from the exile, righteousness would abound under the re-establishment of the temple service and the means of grace. Nor can there be any doubt, I think, that the mind of the prophet was also fixed on the prevalence of righteousness which would yet take place under the Messiah, whose coming, though remotely, would be one of the results of the return from the exile, and of whose advent that return would be so strikingly emblematic. ¶ *Let the earth open.* As it does when the showers descend, and render it mellow, and when it brings forth grass, and plants, and



fruits. ¶ *And let them bring forth salvation.* The Chaldee renders this, "Let the earth open, and the dead revive, and righteousness be revealed at the same time." The idea is, let the earth and the heavens produce righteousness, or become fruitful in producing salvation. Salvation shall abound *as if* it descended like showers and dews, and as if the fertile earth everywhere produced it. Vitringa supposes that it means that the hearts of men shall be opened and prepared for repentance and the reception of the truth by the Holy Spirit, as the earth is made mellow and adapted to the reception of seed by the rain and dew. ¶ *And let righteousness spring up together.* Let it at the same time *germinate* as a plant does. It shall abound. It shall spring forth like green grass, and like flowers and plants in the well-watered earth. The language in the verse is figurative, and very beautiful. The idea is, that peace, prosperity, and righteousness should abound; that they should start up like the fruits of the earth when it is well watered with the dews and rains of heaven; that the land and world should be clothed in moral loveliness; and that the fruits of salvation should be abundant everywhere. That there was a *partial* fulfilment of this on the return to the land of Canaan, there can be no doubt. The Jews were for a time at least much more distinguished for piety than they had been before. Idolatry ceased; the temple was rebuilt; the worship of God was re-established; and the nation enjoyed unwoneted prosperity. But there is a richness and fulness in the language which is not met by anything that occurred in the return from the exile; and it doubtless referred to much more important events, and receives its fulfilment only under that more important deliverance of which the return from Babylon was but the dim emblem. As referred to the Messiah, and to his reign, may we not regard it as descriptive of the following things? (1) The prevalence and diffusion of the knowledge of salvation under his own preaching and that of the apostles. Religion was re-

vived throughout Judea, and spread with vast rapidity throughout almost the whole of the known world. It seemed as if the very heavens shed down righteousness on all lands, and the earth, so long barren and sterile, brought forth the fruits of salvation. Every country partook of the benefits of the descending showers of grace, and the moral world put on a new aspect—like the earth after descending dews and rains. (2) It is beautifully descriptive of a revival of religion, like that on the day of Pentecost, and like those which have so abundantly blessed our own land. In such scenes it seems as if the very heavens "poured down" righteousness. It descends like heavy and fertilizing rains; or like the far-diffused and gentle dew. A church smiles under its influence like parched and barren fields under rains and dews, and society puts on an aspect of loveliness, like the earth after abundant showers. Salvation seems to start forth with the beauty of the green grass, or of the unfolding buds, producing leaves, and flowers, and abundant fruits. There cannot be found anywhere a more beautiful description of a genuine revival of pure religion than in this verse. (3) It is descriptive, doubtless, of what is *yet* to take place under the Messiah on the earth, in the better days which are to succeed to the present, when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth. The heavens shall drop down righteousness, and the clouds shall distil salvation, and the earth shall bring forth the fruits of holiness, and the world shall be full of the love of God. All the earth shall be blessed, as if descending showers should produce universal fertility, and every land, now desolate, barren, and sterile, and horrid by sin, shall become "like a well-watered garden," in reference to salvation, and shall be full of the fruits of holiness. How desirable is it that such times should come! How desirable in reference to each church and community! How desirable in reference to the whole world! And how fervently should every friend of the Redeemer, and every well-wisher of man

9. Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd  
 "strive with the potsherds of the

Jer. 18 6.

earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

NEW TRANSLATION.

9. Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!

A potsherd of the potsherds of the earth!

Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?

Or thy work [say of thee], He hath no hands?

say, "Let the heavens shower down righteousness, and let the clouds distil salvation!"

9. *Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!* This verse commences a new subject. Its connexion with the preceding is not very obvious. It may be designed to prevent the objections and cavils of the unbelieving Jews who were disposed to murmur against God, and to arraign the wisdom of his dispensations in regard to them, in permitting them to be oppressed by their enemies, and in promising them deliverance instead of preventing their captivity. So Lowth understands it. Rosenmüller regards it as designed to meet a cavil, because God chose to deliver them by Cyrus, a foreign prince, and a stranger to the true religion, rather than by one of their own nation. Kimchi, and some others, suppose that it is designed to repress the pride of the Babylonians who designed to keep the Jews in bondage, and who would thus contend with God. But perhaps the idea is of a more general nature. It may be designed to refer to the fact that *any* interposition of God; any mode of manifesting himself to men meets with enemies, and with those who are disposed to contend with him; and *especially* any display of his mercy and grace in a great revival of religion. In the previous verse the prophet had spoken of the revival of religion. It would be like descending dews and rains. Perhaps he here adverts to the fact that *such* a manifestation of his mercy would meet with opposition, and with those who would contend with their Maker, and resist him. So

it was when the Saviour came, and when Christianity spread around the world; so it is in every revival now; and so it will be, perhaps, in the spreading of the Gospel throughout the world in the times that shall usher in the millennium. Men thus contend with their Maker, and resist him. They resist the influences of his Spirit; they strive against the appeals made to them; *they oppose his sovereignty*; they are enraged at the preaching of the Gospel; and they often combine to oppose him. That this is the meaning of this passage seems to be the sentiment of the apostle Paul, who has borrowed this image, and has applied it in a similar manner: "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" Rom. ix. 20, 21. The object of Paul in this passage, is to show the impropriety of resisting the sovereignty of God, and his right to deal with his creatures as seems good in his sight. So in the passage before us, there is a similar design. It is *implied* that men are opposed to the ways which God takes to govern the world; it is *affirmed* that calamity shall follow all the resistance which man shall make, and all his contentions with God. This woe shall follow, because, (1) God has all power, and none can successfully resist him, and all who contend with him must be defeated and overthrown; and (2) because God is *right*, and the sinner who opposes him is wrong, and

10. Woe unto him that saith | thou? or to the woman, What  
unto *his* father, What begettest | hast thou brought forth?

NEW TRANSLATION.

10. Woe unto him that saith to his father, what begettest thou?  
And to his mother, what hast thou brought forth?

he must and will be punished for his resistance. ¶ Let the *potsherd*, &c. Lowth renders this:—

Woe unto him that contendeth with the power  
that formed him;

The potsherd with the moulder of the clay.

Noyes renders it:—

Woe to him that contendeth with his Maker!  
A potsherd of the potsherds of the earth!

The word rendered “potsherd,” *פֶּשֶׁרֶת*, *hēšēšet*, means, properly, a shard or sherd, i. e., a fragment of an earthen vessel. Job ii. 8; xli. 22; Ps. xxii. 16; Deut. vi. 21; xi. 33. It is then put proverbially for anything frail, mean, and contemptible. Here it is undoubtedly put for man, regarded as weak, fragile, contemptible, in his efforts against God. Our translation would seem to denote that it was *appropriate* for man to contend with man, but not for him to contend with God; that he might contend with equals, but not with one so much his superior as God; or that he might have some hope of success in contending with his fellow men, but none in contending with God. But this sense does not well suit the connexion. The idea in the mind of the prophet is, not that such contentions are either proper or appropriate among men, but it is the supreme folly and sin of contending with God; and the thought in illustration of this is not that men may appropriately contend with each other, but it is the superlative weakness and fragility of man. The translation proposed, therefore, by Jerome, “woe to him who contends with his Maker—*testa de samis terra*—a potsherd among the earthen pots (made of the earth of Samos) of the earth”—and which is found in the Syriac, and adopted by Noyes, is doubtless the true rendering. This translation is approved by Rosenmüller and Gesenius. According to

Gesenius, the particle *נָא* here, means *by or among*; and the idea is, that man is a potsherd among the potsherds of the earth; a weak, fragile creature, among others equally so—and yet *presuming* impiously to contend with the God that made him. The LXX render this, “Is anything endowed with excellence? I fashioned it like the clay of a potter. Will the ploughman plough the ground all the day long? Will the clay say to the potter,” &c. ¶ *Shall the clay*, &c. It would be absurd for the clay to complain to him that moulds it of the form which he chooses to give it. Not *less* absurd is it for man, made of clay, and moulded by the hand of God, to complain of the fashion in which he has made him; of the rank which he has assigned him in the scale of being; and of the purposes which he designs to accomplish by him. ¶ *Or thy work*. Shall that which you make, say of you. ¶ *He hath no hands*? He has no skill, no wisdom, no power. It is by the *hand* chiefly that pottery is moulded; and the hands here stand for the skill or wisdom which is evinced in making it. The Syriac renders it, “Neither am I the work of thy hands.”

10. *Woe unto him that saith unto his father*, &c. It is wicked and foolish for a son to complain of his father or mother in regard to his birth, or rank and condition of life. Such an act would be deemed anywhere dishonorable; and would be regarded, in the highest degree, as wanting in proper respect for a parent. Probably the idea is, that if a child is born in humble rank or circumstances of life; if he is born to poverty and a hard lot; if, by his birth, he is placed in circumstances less advantageous than others, he would have no right to complain of his parents, or to regard them as having acted improperly

11. Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, \* and concerning the work of my hands command ye <sup>P</sup> me.

o Jer. 31. 1. Gal. 3. 26.

p John 16. 23

NEW TRANSLATION.

11. Thus saith JEHOVAH, the Holy One of Israel and his Maker,  
Concerning things to come ask of me;  
Concerning my children, and the work of my hands, command me.

in having entered into the marriage relation. In like manner, it would be *not less* improper, certainly, to complain of God who has brought us into existence by his own direct power, and made us in accordance with his own purpose and will, and who acts as a sovereign in the various allotments of our lives. The design is to rebuke the spirit of complaining against the allotments of Providence—a spirit which perhaps prevailed among the Jews, and which, in fact, is found everywhere among men; and to show that God, as a sovereign, has a right to rule and reign, and to dispose of his creatures in the manner which he shall judge to be best. The passage proves, (1) that man is formed by God; that he has received his existence, and rank in life, from him; and that all his affairs are ordered by him, as really as the work of the potter is moulded by the hands of the workman; (2) that God had a *design* in making man, and in ordering and arranging his circumstances in life; and that man is little qualified to judge of that design, and not at all qualified to pronounce it unwise, any more than the clay could charge him that worked it into a vessel as he chose, with want of wisdom; and (3) that God is a sovereign, and does as he pleases. He has formed man as he chose, as really as the potter moulds the clay into any shape, or any vessel, which he pleases. He has given him his rank in creation; given him such a body—strong, vigorous, and comely; or feeble, deformed, and sickly, as he pleased—just as the potter moulds the clay; he has given him such an intellect—vigorous, manly, and powerful; or weak, feeble, and timid, as he pleased; he has determined his circumstances in

life—whether riches, poverty, an elevated rank, or a depressed condition, just as he saw fit; and he is a sovereign also in the dispensation of his grace—having a right to pardon whom he will, to sanctify whom he chooses, and to save whom he pleases; nor has man any right to complain. This passage, however, should not be adduced to prove that God in *all respects* moulds the character and destiny of men, as the potter does the clay. Regard should be had, in the interpretation, to the fact that God is just, and good, and wise, as well as a sovereign; and that man is himself a moral agent, and subject to the laws of moral agency which God has appointed. God does nothing wrong. He does not compel man to sin and then condemn him for it. He does not *make* him a transgressor by physical power, as the potter moulds the clay, and then doom him for it to destruction. He is a just and holy sovereign; he does his pleasure according to the eternal laws of equity; and man has no right to call in question his authority, or the rectitude of his sovereign dispensations.

11. *Thus saith the LORD.* This verse is designed still further to illustrate the general subject referred to in this chapter, and especially to show them, that instead of complaining of his designs, or of finding fault with his sovereignty, it was their duty and privilege to *inquire* respecting his dealings, and even to “command” him. He was the just sovereign, and he was willing to be inquired of, and to instruct them in regard to the events which were occurring. ¶ *The Holy One of Israel.* The Holy God who was worshipped by Israel, and who was their protector. ¶ *And his Maker.* See Note, ch. xliii. 1. ¶ *Ask*

12. I <sup>q</sup> have made the earth, | and created man upon it: I, *even*  
 q Ps. 102. 25. Heb. 11. 3. my hands, have stretched out the

## NEW TRANSLATION.

12. I made the earth,  
 And man upon it I have created;

*me of things to come.* "I alone can direct and order future events; and it is your duty and privilege to make inquiry respecting those events." Lowth renders this as a question, "Do ye question me concerning my children?" But the more correct rendering is, doubtless, that in our translation, where it is represented as a duty to make inquiry respecting future events from God. The idea is, (1) that God alone could direct future events, and he alone could give information respecting them; (2) that instead of murmuring and complaining at his allotments, they should humbly inquire of him in regard to their design, and the proper manner of meeting them; (3) that they would be *fitted* for those future events only by seeking grace at his hand; and (4) that if inquired of respecting them, if they were made the subject of humble, fervent, believing prayer, he would order them so as to promote their welfare, and would furnish them grace to meet them in a proper manner. ¶ *Concerning my sons.* Those who worship me, and are my adopted children. In regard to their destiny; to what is to happen to them; and to the proper way of meeting future events. It is implied that God had a deep interest in their happiness, that he loved them as his children; and that they had the privilege of presenting their wants, and of pleading for his favor and regard, with the assurance that he would be propitious to their cry, and would order events so as to promote their welfare. ¶ *And concerning the work of my hands.* In regard to what I do. This is also read as a question by Lowth. "And do ye give me directions concerning the work of my hands?" According to this interpretation, God would reprove them for presuming to give him direction about what he should do, in accordance with the sentiment in

vs. 9, 10. This interpretation, also, is adopted by Vitranga, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and some others. Grotius renders it, "That is, hinder, if you can, my doing what I will with them. Thus you will show what you can do, and what I can do." Rosenmüller supposes it to mean, "commit my sons, and the work of my hands to me; suffer me to do with my own what I will." It seems to me, however, that the word "command," is here to be taken rather as indicating the privilege of his people to present their desires in regard to the future events which were to take place in reference to themselves, and to denote the language of fervent and respectful petition; and that God here indicates that he would comply with their desires, that he would, so to speak, allow them to *direct* him; that he would hear their prayers, and that he would conform the events of his administration to their wishes and their welfare. This is the most obvious interpretation; and this will, perhaps, suit the connexion as well as any other. Instead of complaining, and finding fault with him, and opposing his administration, (vs. 9, 10,) it was their privilege to come before him and spread out their wants, and even to *give direction* in regard to future events, so far as his children were concerned, and so far as the events of his administration would bear on them, and he would meet their desires. This was better than to murmur; this was their privilege in all that seemed dark in the dispensations of his hand. Thus interpreted, it accords with the numerous passages of the Bible which command us to pray; and with the promises of God that he will meet our wants, and lend a listening ear to our cries.

12. *I have made the earth, &c.* God here asserts that he had made all things, doubtless with a view to show his

heavens, and all their host have I commanded.

13. I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will <sup>1</sup> direct

all his ways: he shall build <sup>r</sup> my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price <sup>s</sup> nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.

<sup>r</sup> 2 Chron. 36. 22. Ezra 1. 1. &c.  
<sup>s</sup> ch. 52. 3.

<sup>1</sup> or, *make straight*.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

My hands stretched out the heavens,  
And all their host have I commanded.

13. I have raised him up in righteousness,  
And will make all his ways plain,  
He shall build my city, and release my captives,  
Not for price, nor for ransom;  
Saith JEHOVAH of hosts.

power, and that he was able to hear their cry, and to grant an answer to their requests. His agency was visible everywhere, alike in forming and sustaining all things, and in raising up for them a deliverer. They might, therefore, go before him with confidence, and spread out all their wants. ¶ *Have stretched out the heavens.* Note, ch. xl. 26. ¶ *And all their host.* The stars. Notes, ch. i. 9; xl. 26. ¶ *Have I commanded.* As a leader of an army. All are under my direction and control. The idea is, that that God who had made all things, and whose agency was seen everywhere, was able to protect them in times of trial, and that they might with confidence commit their cause to him. What more can be needed by his people than the friendship and protection of him who made the heavens and the earth, and who leads on the stars?

13. *I have raised him up.* That is, Cyrus. Note, ch. xli. 2. ¶ *In righteousness.* In ch. xli. 2, he is called "the righteous man." He had raised him up to accomplish his just purpose; or in the fulfilment of his own righteous plans. It does not necessarily mean that Cyrus was a righteous man. See Note, ch. xli. 2. ¶ *And I will direct all his ways.* Marg. *Make straight.* This is the meaning of the Hebrew word. Note, ch. xl. 4. The sense here is, I will make his paths all smooth and level, i. e. whatever obstacles are in his way I will remove, and give him emi-

nent success. ¶ *He shall build my city.* Jerusalem. It shall be done by his command. See Ezra i. 2, where in his proclamation, Cyrus says, "JEHOVAH, God of heaven, hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah." It is very probable that Cyrus was made acquainted with these predictions of Isaiah. Nothing would be more natural than that the Jews in Babylon, when he should become master of the city, knowing that he was the monarch to whom Isaiah referred, and that he had been raised up for their deliverance, should acquaint him with these remarkable prophecies, and show him that God had long before designated him to accomplish this great work. Comp. Note, ch. xli. 28. ¶ *And he shall let go my captives.* He shall release my people from their captivity in Babylon. The Hebrew is, my captivity, or my migration; i. e., those of his people who were in captivity, or who were exiles from their own land. ¶ *Not for price.* They shall not be bought of him; they shall not be purchased of him as slaves; nor shall they be required to purchase their own freedom. They shall be sent away as freemen, and no price shall be exacted for their ransom. Comp. ch. lii. 3. The Jews in Babylon were regarded as captives in war, and therefore as slaves. But it was so ordered by the arrangement of Providence, in raising up Cyrus, that they were not only

14. Thus saith the Lord, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over <sup>t</sup> unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains <sup>u</sup> they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, *saying*, Surely <sup>x</sup> God is in thee; and *there is* none else; *there is* no God.

† Ps. 68. 31. 72. 10, 11. ch. 49. 23. 60. 9—16.

‡ Ps. 149. 8.

§ 1 Cor. 14. 25.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

14. Thus saith JEHOVAH,  
The wealth of Egypt, and the merchandize of Cush,  
And of the Sabeans, men of stature,  
Shall come over unto thee, and shall be thine;  
They shall follow thee; in chains shall they pass along;  
Before thee shall they bow as suppliants, to thee shall they pray  
[saying],  
“In thee only is God, and there is no God besides.”

rescued without ransom, but they received most valuable aid from Cyrus, and from others, for their journey on their return, and for rebuilding the temple. See Ezra, chap. i. ¶ *Nor reward*. Not for ransom. The Hebrew word here used, *תָּרַם*, denotes, properly, that which is given to conciliate the favor of others, and hence often a *bribe*. Here it means, that nothing should be given to Cyrus for their purchase, or to conciliate his favor, and to induce him to set them at liberty. He should do it of his own accord. It was a fact that he not only released them, but that he endowed them with rich and valuable gifts to enable them to restore their temple and city. Ezra i. 7—11.

14. *Thus saith the Lord*. In addition to their return to their own land, they should be favored with signal blessings from other nations. This verse is designed to denote the favors which in subsequent times would be conferred on Jerusalem, the city which (ver. 13) was to be rebuilt. It has reference, according to Lowth, to the conversion of the Gentiles, and their admission into the church of God. Grotius, however, understands it as addressed to Cyrus, and as meaning that because he had released the Jews without reward, therefore God would give

him the wealth of Egypt, Ethiopia, Sabæa, and that those nations should be subject to him. But in this opinion, probably, Grotius stands alone, and the objections to it are so obvious that they need not be specified. Some of the Jewish interpreters suppose that it refers to the same events as those recorded in ch. xliii. 3, and that it relates to the *past*, and to the fact that God had given those nations for the deliverance and protection of his people. They suppose that particular reference is had to the slaughter and destruction of the army of Sennacherib. Vitringa regards it as referring to the fact that proselytes should be made from all these nations to the true religion, and finds, as he supposes, a fulfilment of it in the times of the Saviour and the Apostles. In regard to the true meaning of the passage, we may observe (1) that it refers to the times that would *succeed* their return from their exile; and not to events that were then past. This is apparent on the face of the passage. (2.) It relates to Jerusalem or to the people of God, and not to Cyrus. This is evident, because it was not true that these nations became subject to *Cyrus* after his taking Babylon, for it was not Cyrus, but his son Cambyses that invaded and subdued Egypt; and because the whole phraseology has re-

ference to a conversion to religion, and not to the subjection involved in the conquests of war. (3.) It appropriately relates to a conversion to the true God, and an embracing of the true religion. This is implied in the language in the close of the verse, "saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God." (4.) The passage, therefore, means that subsequent to their return from Babylon, in the future history of the true people of God, there would be the conversion of those nations; or that they—perhaps here mentioned as the representatives of great and mighty nations in general—would be converted to the true faith, and that their wealth and power would be consecrated to the true religion, and the cause of JEHOVAH. Jerusalem was to be the centre from which would radiate the true religion, and the distant nations would acknowledge that they received it from her, and she was to be strengthened by the accession of all these numbers, and all this wealth. The time when this was to be, is not fixed in the prophecy itself. It is only determined that it was to be *subsequent* to the return from the exile, and to be one of the consequences of that return. The fulfilment, therefore, may be sought either under the first preaching of the gospel, or in times still more remote. A more full explanation will occur in the examination of the different parts of the verse. ¶ *The labour of Egypt.* That is, the fruit, or result of the labor of Egypt; the wealth of Egypt. See the word thus used in Job x. 3; Isa. lv. 2; Jer. iii. 24; xx. 5; Ezek. xxiii. 9; Ps. lxxviii. 46. The idea is, that there should be converts from Egypt, or that Egypt would be converted to the true religion, and that its wealth would thus be brought and consecrated to the service of the true God. The conversion of Egypt is not unfrequently foretold. Ps. lxviii. 31:

Princes shall come out of Egypt,  
Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

See Notes on ch. xix. 18—22—where the conversion of Egypt is introduced and discussed at length. ¶ *And mer-*

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*chandise of Ethiopia.* On the situation of Ethiopia, see Notes on ch. xviii. 1. The word *merchandise* here means the same as wealth, since their wealth consisted in their traffic. That Cush or Ethiopia, would be converted to the true religion, and be united to the people of God, is declared in the passage above quoted from Ps. lxviii. 31; and also in various other places. Thus in Ps. lxxxvii. 4: "Behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there." Zeph. iii. 10. "From beyond the ruins of Ethiopia, my suppliants, even the daughters of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering." ¶ *And of the Sabæans, men of stature.* סִבְאִים, *sibhānim*. The inhabitants of Seba, סֵבָא, *Sebā*, n

*Shebān*. Sheba, and the Sabæans of that name, were a country and people of Arabia Felix—comprising a considerable part of the country now known as *Yemen*, lying in the south-west part of Arabia. It is the most fertile and beautiful part of Arabia. Joel iv. 8; Job i. 15. That country abounded in frankincense, myrrh, and spices, and gold and precious stones. 1 Kings x. 1; Isa. lx. 6; Jer. vi. 20. *Seba*, here referred to, was a different country. It was inhabited by a descendant of Cush, Gen. x. 7, and was probably the same as Meroë, in Upper Egypt. See Note on Isa. xliii. 3. That this people was distinguished for height of stature is expressly affirmed by Herodotus (iii. 20), who says of the Ethiopians, among whom the Sabæans are to be reckoned, that they were "the tallest of men," λέγονται εἶναι μέγιστοι ἀνθρώπων; and Solinus affirms that the Ethiopians are "twelve feet high." Agatharchides, an ancient Greek poet quoted by Bochart, Phaleg. ii. 26, says of the Sabæans, τὰ σώματά ἐστι τῶν κατοικοῦντων ἀξιολογώτερα—the bodies of those who dwell there are worthy of special remark. This shows at least a coincidence between the accounts of Scripture and of profane writers. This country is alluded to by Solomon, in Psalm lxxii. 10:

The kings of Tarshish and of the Isles shall  
bring presents;

The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.



They are connected here with the  
 tians, and with the inhabitants of Ethio-  
 pia or Cush; and their conversion to  
 the true religion would occur probably  
 about the same time. Doubtless the  
 Christian religion was early carried into  
 these countries, for among those con-  
 verted on the day of Pentecost, were  
 foreigners from Egypt, and the adjacent  
 countries (Acts ii. 10, 11), who would  
 carry the gospel with them on their  
 return. See also the case of the Eunuch  
 of Ethiopia, Acts viii. 26—39; by whom,  
 undoubtedly, the gospel was carried at  
 once to that region. The first Bishop  
 of Ethiopia was Frumentius, who was  
 made bishop of that country about A. D.  
 330. There is a current tradition  
 among the Ethiopians that the queen of  
 Sheba, who visited Solomon, was called  
*Maqueda*, and that she was not from  
 Arabia, but was a queen of their country.  
 They say that she adopted the Jewish  
 religion, and introduced it among her  
 people; and the eunuch, who was trea-  
 surer under queen Candace, was proba-  
 bly a Jew by religion, if not by birth.  
 Yet there will be in future times a  
 more signal fulfilment of this prophecy,  
 when the inhabitants of these countries,  
 and the people of all other nations shall  
 be converted to the true religion, and  
 shall give themselves to God. Comp.  
 Notes on ch. lx. 3—14. That prophecy  
 has a remarkable similarity to this, and  
 indeed is little more than a beautiful  
 expansion of it. ¶ *Shall come over unto  
 thee.* To thy religion; or shall be  
 united to thee in the worship of the  
 true God. It denotes a change, not of  
 place, but of character, and of religion.  
 ¶ *And they shall be thine.* A part of thy  
 people; united to thee. The whole  
*language* of this description, however,  
 is taken from the custom in the con-  
 quests of war, where one nation is made  
 subject to another, and is led along in  
 chains. It is here figurative, denoting  
 that the true religion would make rapid  
 and extensive conquests among the hea-  
 then; that they would become subject to  
 it; and that the gospel would lead cap-  
 tive the other religions of the earth;  
 that is, that those religions would be  
 subdued before it; and that the true re-

ligion would everywhere triumph over  
 all others. The phrase, "shall come  
 over," &c., denotes that their subjection  
 should be voluntary, and that they should  
 freely abandon their own systems;  
 while the phrases, "shall be thine," "in  
 chains," &c., denote the triumphant  
 and mighty power of the truth. ¶ *They  
 shall come after thee.* Shall be thy fol-  
 lowers; shall tread in thy steps. You  
 shall precede them in the honor of hav-  
 ing conveyed to them the true religion,  
 and in that priority of rank which  
 always belongs to those who are first  
 blessed with intelligence, and with the  
 revelation of God. ¶ *In chains shall  
 they come over.* Language taken from  
 conquests when subjugated nations are  
 led along as captives in a triumph;  
 and here denoting the power of that  
 truth which should subdue the false  
 systems, and bring them into com-  
 plete and entire subjection to the  
 truth. They should be as com-  
 pletely subdued as are captives in war;  
 they should be led along by the true  
 religion as triumphantly as if in chains.  
 This denotes only the fact that they  
 would be subdued. It does not mean  
 that it would be against their will, or  
 that they could not have resisted it;  
 but merely that they would be in fact  
 as entirely subject to the true religion  
 as prisoners of war are, who are in  
 chains, to the will of their conquerors.  
 See notes on ch. xiv. 1, 2. ¶ *And they  
 shall fall down unto thee.* Recognising  
 thee as having the knowledge of the  
 true God. To fall down is indicative  
 of reverence; and it means here that  
 Jerusalem would be honored as being  
 the source whence the true religion  
 should emanate. Comp. Luke xxiv. 47.  
 An expression similar to that here used  
 occurs in Isa. xlix. 23. "And kings—  
 and queens—shall bow down to thee  
 with their face toward the earth, and  
 lick up the dust of thy feet." ¶ *They  
 shall make supplication unto thee.* Lowth  
 renders this, "And in suppliant guise  
 address thee." The Hebrew properly  
 means, they shall pray unto thee; but  
 the idea is, that they should come as  
 suppliants to Jerusalem, to the people  
 of God, confessing that there was the

15. Verily thou art a God | that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.  
9 Ps. 44. 24. ch. 6. 17.

## NEW TRANSLATION.

15. Truly thou art a God that hidest thyself,  
 O God of Israel the Saviour.

knowledge of the only true God, and praying that they would impart to them an acquaintance with the true religion. See Notes on ch. ii. 3. The idea indicated by this is, that there would be a condition of deep and anxious solicitude among heathen nations on the subject of the true religion, and that they would seek counsel and direction from those who were in possession of it. Such a state has already existed to some extent among the heathen; and the Scriptures, I think, lead us to suppose that the final spread and triumph of the gospel will be preceded by such an inquiry prevailing extensively in the heathen world. God will show them the folly of idolatry; he may raise up reformers among themselves; the extension of commercial intercourse will acquaint them with the comparative happiness and prosperity of Christian nations; and the growing consciousness of their own inferiority will lead them to desire that which has conferred so extensive benefits on other lands, and lead them to come as suppliants, and ask that teachers and the ministers of religion may be sent to them. One of the most remarkable characteristics of the present time is, that such a state of inquiry extensively exists; that heathen nations are becoming increasingly sensible of their ignorance and comparative degradation; that they welcome the ministers and teachers sent out from Christian lands; and the increased commerce of the world is thus diffusing a spirit of universal inquiry, and preparing the world for the final spread of the gospel. ¶ *God is in thee, &c.* In Jerusalem; or thou art in possession of the only true system of religion, and art the worshipper of the only true God. They shall acknowledge that the true religion is there, and shall come to obtain the knowledge of

the way of salvation. See ch. xlix. 7, lx. 14.

15. *Verily, &c.* Truly; an affirmation made in view of the remarkable revelations which had been referred to, and the purposes then disclosed. ¶ *That hidest thyself.* That is, that hidest thy counsels and plans. The idea is, that the purposes of God are often obscure, and concealed; that his ways seem to be dark and are mysterious, until the distant event discloses his purpose, or his revelation shows his design; that a long series of dark and mysterious events seem to succeed each other, trying to the faith of his people, and where the reason of his doings cannot be seen. The remark here seems to be made by the prophet, in view of the fact, that the dealings of God with his people in their long and painful exile would be mysterious, and to them inscrutable; that his plans would be in a great measure concealed; but that a future glorious manifestation would disclose the nature of his designs, and make his purposes known. See ch. lv. 8, 9. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," &c. Comp. Ps. xlv. 24. Note Isa. viii. 17. ¶ *The Saviour.* Still the Saviour of his people, though his ways are mysterious, and the reason of his dealings often unknown. The LXX render this, "for thou art God, though we did not know it, O God of Israel the Saviour." This verse teaches us that we should not repine or murmur under the mysterious and trying allotments of Providence. They may be dark now. God's purposes may be hidden. But in due time they will be disclosed, and we shall be permitted to see his design, and to witness results so glorious as shall satisfy us that his ways are all just, and his dealings right.

16. They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion <sup>z</sup> together, *that are makers of idols.*

z Ps. 97. 7.

17. *But Israel* <sup>a</sup> shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting <sup>b</sup> salvation: ye shall not be ashamed <sup>c</sup> nor confounded <sup>d</sup> world without end.

a Rom. 2. 28, 29. 11. 26.  
c Ps. 23. 2, 3.

b Jer. 31. 3.  
d 1 Pet. 2. 6.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

16. They shall be ashamed and confounded all of them together:

They shall retire in confusion who are the makers of idols.

17. But Israel shall be saved by JEHOVAH with eternal salvation;

Ye shall not be ashamed, and ye shall not be confounded to eternal ages.

16. *They shall be ashamed, and also confounded.* That is, their idols which they have made, and in which they have put their confidence, shall not be able to aid and defend them in the day of trial. They shall find all their hopes fail, and shall be suffused with shame that they were ever so senseless as to trust in blocks of wood and stone. See Notes, ch. i. 29; xx. 5; xxx. 5; xlii. 17. ¶ *They shall go to confusion.* They shall all retire in shame and disgrace. That is, when they have gone to supplicate their idols, and have looked to them for help, they shall find them unable to render them any aid, and they shall retire with shame.

17. *But Israel shall be saved.* Referring primarily to the Jews in Babylon, but affirming the universal truth that the true Israel (Comp. Rom. ii. 28, 29), that is, the people of God, shall be saved from all their persecutions and trials, and shall be brought to his everlasting kingdom. ¶ *In the LORD.* By JEHOVAH — יהוה; Sept., *ἀπὸ κυρίου*. It shall be done by the power of JEHOVAH, and shall be traced to him alone. No mere human power could have saved them from their captivity in Babylon; no human power can save the soul from hell. ¶ *With an everlasting salvation.* It shall not be a temporary deliverance, but it shall be perpetual. The salvation of his people is eternal. They shall live for ever. In heaven they shall meet no more foes; they shall suffer no more calamity; they shall be driven into no exile; they shall never die. ¶ *Ye shall*

*not be ashamed nor confounded, &c.* This means (1) that they should never find God to fail, i. e., to be either unable or unwilling to befriend and rescue them. The worshippers of idols should find that they could not benefit them, and that no reliance could be placed in them in "the times that tried men's souls;" but not so with those who put their trust in God. Their reliance on him would never fail; his strength would never be exhausted, or be insufficient to meet all their enemies; and they should always find him "a refuge and strength, a present help in time of trouble." Ps. xlii. 1. (2) That they should never be ashamed, i. e., have cause to regret that they had put their trust in him. The idea is, that they who become his friends never regret it; never are ashamed of it; never repent it. The time never can come, when any one who has become a true friend of God will ever regret it. In no circumstances of life, in no possible situation, will they repent that they have become the children of the Most High. In prosperity or adversity; in sickness or health; at home or abroad; in safety or in danger; in life or in death; there will be no situation in which they will have reason to be ashamed that they gave their hearts to God. Nor have there been any true Christians who have regretted their becoming the friends of the Redeemer. It may have exposed them to persecution; their names may have been cast out as evil; they may have been stripped of their property; they may have been thrown into dungeons, laid on the rack, or led to th

18. For thus saith the LORD that it not in vain, he formed it to be created the heavens; God himself inhabited: I *am* the LORD; and that formed the earth and made *there is none else.*  
 it; he hath established it, he created 19. I have not spoken in secret,

## NEW TRANSLATION.

18. For thus saith JEHOVAH who created the heavens,  
 He is the God who formed the earth and made it,  
 He hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited;  
 I *am* JEHOVAH, and none besides.  
 19. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth.  
 I have not said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain!  
 I JEHOVAH speak righteousness; I declare things that are right.

stake; but they have not regretted that they became the friends of God. They have had an approving conscience, and the hope of heaven; and God has sustained them. Nor will they *ever* regret it. No man on a dying bed regrets that he is a friend of God. No man at the judgment bar will be ashamed to be a Christian. And in all the interminable duration of the world to come, the period never will, never *can* arrive, when any one will ever regret that he became a child of God, or be ashamed that he gave his heart *early*, and *entirely* to the Redeemer. Why then should not all become his friends? Why will not men pursue that course which they know they never *can* regret, rather than the ways of sin and folly, which they *know* must cover them with shame and confusion hereafter?

18. *For thus saith the LORD, &c.* This verse is designed to induce them to put unwavering confidence in the true God. For this purpose, the prophet runs over the great things which God had done in proof that he alone was Almighty, and was worthy of trust. ¶ *He hath established it.* That is, the earth. The language here is derived from the supposition that the earth is laid upon a foundation, and is made firm or made to keep its place. The LXX render this, "God who displayed the earth to view, and who having made it, divided it," διώρισεν αὐτήν; that is, parcelled it out to be inhabited. This accords well with the scope of the passage. ¶ *He cre-*

*ated it not in vain.* He did not form it to be an empty waste, to remain a vast desert without inhabitants. He had an important object in view, and the earth was made, and is preserved for that. ¶ *He formed it to be inhabited.* By man, and the various tribes of animals. He designed that it should sustain countless multitudes of animated beings. He makes it a convenient habitation for them; adapts its climates, its soil, and its productions, to their nature; and makes it yield abundance for their support. The main idea, I think, in the statement of this general truth is, that God designed that the earth at large should be inhabited; that he did not design that it should lie waste; and that, therefore, he intended that Judea—then supposed to be lying waste while the captives were in Babylon—should be re-peopled, re-cultivated, and again become the happy abode of the returning exiles. He did not intend that it should be given up to desolation, but that they should return, and dwell again in the land of their fathers. So Grotius interprets it. The Jews from this passage infer, that the earth shall be inhabited after the resurrection—an idea which has every probability, since there will not be fewer reasons why the earth should be inhabited *then* than there are now; nor can there be any reasons why the earth should *then* exist in vain any more than now. ¶ *And there is none else.* See Note on ver. 6.

19. *I have not spoken in secret.*

\* in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob,

*Deut. 29. 29. 30. 11, &c.*

Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

*/ Pa. 9. 10. 69. 32.*

word rendered "secret," *שֵׁתֶּר*, *sēthēr*, denotes a hiding or covering; and the phrase here means secretly, privately. He did not speak from secret, obscure, and hidden places. He did not imitate the heathen oracles by uttering his predictions from dark and deep caverns, and encompassed with the circumstances of awful mystery, and with designed obscurity. ¶ *In a dark place of the earth.* From a cave, or dark recess, in the manner of the heathen oracles. The heathen responses were usually given from some dark cavern or recess, doubtless the better to impress the minds of those who consulted the oracles with awe, and to make them more ready to credit the revelations of the fancied god. Such was the seat of the Sybil mentioned by Virgil.

"Excisum Euboicæ latus ingens rupis in antrum." *ZEN. vi. 42.*

Such also was the famous oracle at Delphi. Strabo says, "the oracle is said to be a hollow cavern of considerable depth, with an opening not very wide." Lib. 9. And Diodorus, giving an account of this oracle, says, "that there was in that place a great chasm, or cleft in the earth; in which very place is now situated what is called the Adytum of the temple." In contradistinction from all this, God says that he had spoken openly, and without these circumstances of designed obscurity and darkness. In the *language* here, there is a remarkable resemblance to what the Saviour said of himself, and it is not improbable that he had this passage in his mind: "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing." John xviii. 20. A similar declaration occurs in Deut. xxx. 11: "This commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far

off." ¶ *I said not unto the seed of Jacob.* I have not said it to my people. The seed, or the race of Jacob, here means his people: and the idea is, that he had not commanded them to worship him for naught, or to call upon him without his being ready to answer them. ¶ *Seek ye me in vain.* The phrase, "seek ye," may refer to worship in general; or it may more properly refer to their calling upon him in times of calamity and trial. The sense is, that it had not been a vain or useless thing for them to serve him; that he had been their protector, and their friend; that he had conferred on them important blessings; and that they had not gone to him, and spread out their wants for naught. He had heard their prayers; he had granted them rich blessings in answer to their supplications. It is still true, that God does not command his people to seek him in vain. He hears their cry; he answers their request. He sends none empty away. All his people can thus testify that he does not command them to seek and serve him for naught. Comp. Deut. xxxii. 47. His service is always attended with a rich blessing to his people; and they are his witnesses that he confers on them inexpressibly great and valuable rewards. It follows from this, (1) That his people have abundant encouragement to go to him in all times of trial, persecution, and affliction, and to seek his face; (2) that they have encouragement to go to him in a low state of religion, to confess their sins, to supplicate his mercy, and to pray for the influences of his Holy Spirit, and the revival of his work; and (3) that the service of God is always attended with rich reward. Idols do not benefit those who serve them. The pursuit of pleasure, gain, and ambition, is often attended with no reward, and is never attended with any benefits that satisfy the wants of the undying mind;

20. Assemble yourselves and have no knowledge that set up the come; draw near together, ye that wood of their graven image, and are escaped of the nations: \* they pray unto a god that cannot save.

g Eph. 2. 12—16.

NEW TRANSLATION.

20. Assemble yourselves and come;  
 Draw near together ye that are escaped of the nations;  
 They have no knowledge who bear the wood of their graven image,  
 And pray to a god that cannot save.

but the service of God meets all the wants of the soul; fills all its desires; and confers permanent and eternal rewards. ¶ *I the LORD speak righteousness.* I speak that which is true and just. This stands in opposition to the heathen oracles, which often gave false and delusive, and unjust responses. But not so with God. He had not spoken, as they did, from deep and dark places—fit emblems of the obscurity of their answers; he had not, as they had, commanded a service that was unprofitable and vain; he had not commanded them to come and seek him without any satisfactory answer; and he had not, as they had, uttered oracles which were unjust, and fitted to delude. ¶ *I declare things that are right.* Lowth renders this, “who give direct answers;” and supposes it refers to the fact that the heathen oracles often give ambiguous and deceitful responses. God never deceived. His responses, or his declarations, always accorded with the truth; were always correct, true, and unambiguous.

20. *Assemble yourselves, and come.* See Note, ch. xli. 1. This, like the passage in ch. xli. 1, seq., is a solemn appeal to the worshippers of idols or to the world, to come and produce the evidences of their being endowed with omniscience and with almighty power, and of their having claims to the homage of their worshippers. ¶ *Ye that are escaped of the nations.* This phrase has been very variously interpreted. Kimchi supposes that it means those who were distinguished among the nations, their chiefs, and rulers; Aben Ezra sup-

poses that the Babylonians are meant especially; Vitringa, that the phrase denotes *proselytes*, as those who have escaped from the idolatry of the heathen, and have embraced the true religion; Grotius, that it denotes those who survived the slaughter which Cyrus inflicted on the nations. Rosenmüller coincides in opinion with Vitringa. The word here used, *פָּלִיט*, *pālīt*, denotes, properly, one who has escaped by flight from battle, danger, or slaughter. Gen. xiv. 13; Josh. viii. 22. It is not used anywhere in the sense of a proselyte; and the idea here is, I think, that those who had escaped from the slaughter which Cyrus would bring on the nations, were invited to come and declare what benefit they had derived from trusting in idol gods. In ver. 16, God had said they should all be ashamed and confounded who thus put their trust in idols; and he here calls on them as living witnesses that it was so. Those who had put their confidence in idols, and who had seen Cyrus carry his arms over nations and devastate them notwithstanding their vain confidence, could now testify that no reliance was to be placed on them, and could be adduced as witnesses to show the importance of putting their trust in JEHOVAH. ¶ *They have no knowledge, &c.* Those who had thus escaped would be witnesses of the utter folly of putting their trust in an idol god. ¶ *That set up the wood, &c.* The word *wood* is used here to show the folly of worshipping an image thus made, and to show how utterly unable it was to save.

Tell ye, and bring *them* it from that time? *have* not I the near; yea, let them take counsel LORD? and *there* is no God else together: who hath declared this beside me; a just <sup>a</sup> God and a Saviour; *there* is none beside me.

A Rom. 3. 22.

NEW TRANSLATION.

21. Proclaim ye, and bring them near;  
 And let them take counsel together:  
 Who hath declared this from the ancient time?  
 And hath announced it from of old?  
 Is it not I, JEHOVAH, besides whom there is no God?  
 A just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

21. *Tell ye, &c.* That is, announce, and bring forward your strongest arguments. See Note, ch. xli. 1. ¶ *Who hath declared this from ancient time?* Who has clearly announced the events respecting Cyrus, and the conquest of Babylon, and the deliverance from the captivity. The argument is an appeal to the fact that God had clearly foretold these events long before, and that, therefore, he was the true God. To this argument he often appeals in proof that he alone is God. See Note, ch. xli. 22, 23. ¶ *And there is no God else beside me.* There is no one who is able thus to foretell future events, and to show that he is divine. See ver. 5. ¶ *A just God.* A God doing right; whose attribute it is always to do right; whose word is true; whose promises are fulfilled; whose threatenings are executed; whose law is maintained; and who always does that which, under the circumstances of the case, *ought to be done*. This does not refer *particularly* to the fact that he will punish the guilty, but, in the connexion here, rather seems to mean that he would be true and faithful, and that his course would be one of equity. ¶ *And a Saviour.* Saving his people. It was a characteristic of him, that he saved or preserved his people; and his equity, or truth, or justice, was seen in his doing that. His being a "just God" and "a Saviour" are not, set here in contrast or contradiction, as if there was any incongruity in them, or as if they needed to be reconciled; but they rather refer to the same thing,

and rather mean that he was just, and true in saving his people; it was a characteristic of him that he was *so* true to his promises, and so equitable in his government, that he *would* save them. There is here no peculiar and special reference to the work of the atonement. But the *language* is such as will most accurately express the great leading fact in regard to the salvation of sinners. It is in the cross of the Redeemer that God has shown himself eminently to be just, and yet a Saviour; true, and yet merciful; expressing his abhorrence of sin, yet pardoning it; maintaining the honor of his violated law, and yet remitting its penalty and forgiving the offender. It is here, more than anywhere else in our world, that he has shown that he is opposed to transgression, and here alone that he has shown himself to be merciful; and here, in the beautiful language of the Psalmist, that

Mercy and truth are met together;  
 Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Ps. lxxxv. 10.

The same idea is expressed in Rom. iii. 26: "That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." It is the glory of the character of God that he *can* be thus just and merciful at the same time; that he can maintain the honor of his law, secure the stability of his government, and yet extend pardon to any extent. No human administration can do this. Pardon under a human government *always* does much to weaken the authority of the government, and to set aside the majesty of

22. Look <sup>i</sup> unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: | for I *am* God, and *there is none* else.

*i* Ps. 22. 27. John 3. 14, 15.

NEW TRANSLATION.

22. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the  
For I am God, and there is none else.

the law. If *never* exercised indeed, government assumes the form of severity, and of tyranny; if *often*, government becomes a nullity, and the law loses all its terrors, and crime will walk fearless through the earth. But in the divine administration, through the atonement, pardon may be extended to any extent, and yet the honor of the law be maintained, for God has shown *his* hatred of sin in the sufferings of the cross; and the substituted sufferings of the innocent in the place of the guilty, will, *in fact*, do more to restrain from transgression than where the guilty themselves suffer. Of no human administration can it be said that it is at the same time just, and yet forgiving; evincing hatred of the violation of the law, and yet extending mercy to any extent to the violators of the laws. The blending together of these apparently inconsistent attributes belong only to God, and is manifested only in the plan of salvation through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

22. *Look unto me, and be ye saved.* This is said in view of the declaration made in the previous verse, that he is a just God and a Saviour. It is, *because* he sustains this character that all are invited to look to him; and the doctrine is, that the fact that God is at the same time just, and yet a Saviour, or can save consistently *with* his justice, is an argument why they should look to him, and confide in him. If he is at the same time just—true to his promises; righteous in his dealings; maintaining the honor of his law, and his government, and showing his hatred of sin; and also merciful, kind, and forgiving, it is a ground of confidence in him, and we should rejoice in the privilege of looking to him for salvation. The phrase, “look unto me,” means the same as

direct the attention to, as we do to one from whom we expect aid, with a feeling of reliance on him. It denotes a conviction on our part of helplessness—as when a man is drowning, he casts an imploring eye to one on the shore who alone can help him; or when a man is dying, he casts an imploring eye on a physician for assistance. Thus the direction to look to God for salvation implies a deep conviction that we cannot redeem ourselves; a deep feeling that salvation is necessary; a deep conviction of helplessness and of sin; and a deep conviction that he only can save. At the same time it shows the ease of salvation, and the readiness of God to save. What is more easy than to *look* to one for help? What more easy than to cast the eyes, with the heart, towards God the Saviour? What more reasonable than that he should require us to do it? And what more just than that God, if men *will not* look to him in order that they may be saved, should cast them off for ever? Assuredly, if a poor, dying, ruined, and hopeless sinner will not do so simple a thing as to *look* to God for salvation; if he does not deem eternal life worth a look towards God the Saviour, he *ought* to be excluded from heaven, and all the universe will acquiesce in the decision which consigns him to despair. The Vulgate and the Septuagint render this, “turn to me,” or “be converted to me.” ¶ *All the ends of the earth.* For the meaning of this phrase, see Note, ch. xl. 28. The invitation here proves, (1.) that the offers of the gospel are universal. None are excluded. The ends of the earth, the remotest parts of the world, are invited to embrace salvation, and all those portions of the earth might, under this invitation, come and accept the offers of life. (2.) That God



23. I have sworn \* by myself, turn, That unto me <sup>1</sup> every knee the word is gone out of my mouth shall bow, every tongue shall in righteousness, and shall not re- swear.<sup>m</sup>

\* Gen. 22. 16. Heb. 6. 13.

† Phil. 2. 10.

m Deut. 6. 13.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

23. By myself have I sworn; the righteous purpose has gone out of my mouth;

The word that shall not return;  
That to me every knee shall bow,  
Every tongue shall swear.

is willing to save all; or desirous that all should be saved—since he would not give an invitation at all unless he was *desirous* that they should accept of it; nor would he give an invitation unless he was *willing* to save them. (3.) That there is ample provision for their salvation—since God could not invite them to accept of what was not provided for them, nor could he ask them to partake of salvation which had no existence. (4.) That it is his serious and settled purpose that all the ends of the earth shall be invited to embrace the offers of life. The invitation has gone from his lips, and the command has gone forth that it should be carried to every creature (Mark xvi. 15), and now it appertains to his church to carry the glad news of salvation around the world. God intends that it shall be done; and on his church rests the responsibility of seeing it speedily executed. ¶ *For I am God, &c.* This is a *reason* why they should look to him to be saved. None but God could save; and he alone was God. It is clear that none but the true God can save the soul. No one else has power to do it; no one but he can pronounce sin forgiven; no one but he can rescue from a deserved hell. No idol can save. No man can save. No angel can save; and if, therefore, the sinner is saved, he must come to the true God, and look to him, and depend on him for salvation. That he *may* thus come, whatever may have been his character, and whatever is his consciousness of ill-desert, is abundantly proved by this passage. This verse contains truth enough, if properly understood

and applied, to save the world; and on the ground of this, all men, of all ages, nations, climes, ranks, and character, might come and obtain eternal salvation.

23. *I have sworn by myself.* This verse contains a fuller statement of the truth intimated in the previous verse, that the benefits of salvation should yet be extended to all the world. It is the expression of God's solemn purpose that all nations should yet be brought to acknowledge him, and partake of the benefits of the true religion. The expression, "I have sworn by myself," denotes a purpose formed in the most solemn manner, and ratified in the most sacred form. God could swear by no greater than himself (Heb. vi. 13, 16); and this, therefore, is the most solemn assurance that could be possibly given that the purpose which he had formed should be executed. To swear by himself is the same as to swear by his life, or to affirm solemnly that the event shall as certainly occur as that he exists. The same idea is often expressed by the phrase, "As I live." See a parallel declaration in Num. xiv. 21: "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Comp. Num. xiv. 28; Isa. xlix. 18; Jer. xxii. 24; Ezek. v. 11; xiv. 16, 18, 20; Zeph. ii. 9; Rom. xiv. 11. This passage is quoted by Paul in Rom. xiv. 11, where the phrase, "I have sworn by myself," is rendered, "as I live, saith the Lord," showing that they are equivalent expressions. The declaration indicates the utmost certainty. It is an assurance confirmed in the most solemn manner; and the solemnity of the man-

24. Surely, <sup>1</sup> shall *one* say, In shall *men* come; and all that are  
the LORD have I <sup>2</sup> righteousness incensed against him shall be  
and strength. ° *even* to him <sup>p</sup> ashamed.

<sup>1</sup> or, he shall say of me, In the LORD is all  
righteousness and strength.

<sup>2</sup> righteousness.

n Jer. 23. 6. 1 Cor. 1. 30, 31.

o Zech. 10. 6, 12. Eph. 6. 10.

p John 12. 32.

#### NEW TRANSLATION.

24. "Truly in **JEHOVAH**," shall men say,  
"Is their righteousness and strength;"  
To him shall men come,  
And all who were incensed against him shall be ashamed.

ner denotes the importance of the truth affirmed, and the fixed and settled purpose of God to accomplish it. ¶ *The word is gone out of my mouth.* The LXX render this, "righteousness shall proceed from my mouth, my words shall not return." Lowth renders it, "truth is gone forth from my mouth; the word, and it shall not be revoked." Jerome, "the word of righteousness has gone forth from my mouth, and shall not return." Rosenmüller accords with the interpretation of Lowth. Probably the correct translation is, "righteousness," (*i. e.*, the righteous sentence, or purpose, where the word נִדְבָרָה, *tidhāqāh* is used in the sense of truth, see ver. 19), has gone out of my mouth, the word, (*i. e.*, the promise), and it shall not return." In this construction וַיֵּבֶן *vav* before לוֹ *lō* has the force of a relative pronoun, and is to be referred to דְּבָרָה, *dābhār*, the word. The sense is, that God has spoken it, and that all which he has spoken shall certainly be fulfilled. The fact that the declaration has once passed his lips, is full proof that the purpose shall be accomplished. This is not to be understood of any promise which he had made before, but it is a solemn declaration which he now makes by the prophet. ¶ *That unto me every knee shall bow.* To bow, or bend the knee, is indicative of homage or adoration; and the idea is, that all should yet acknowledge him to be God. See Note on Rom. xiv. 11. The ancient mode of offering adoration, or of paying homage, was to place the knee on the ground, and then, in cases of pro-

found reverence, slowly to incline the body until the head touched the earth. This is practised now in eastern countries. Comp. 1 Kings xix. 18; Gen. xli. 43; Matt. xxvii. 29; Rom. xi. 4; Phil. ii. 10; Eph. iii. 14; 2 Chron. vi. 13. The obvious and proper signification of this is, that the time would come when God would be everywhere acknowledged as the true God; when his religion would spread around the world, and all would worship him. It refers, therefore, to the future period of glory on the earth, when all men shall have embraced the true religion, and when idolatry shall have come to an end. ¶ *Every tongue shall swear.* This expression is evidently taken from the practice of taking an oath of allegiance to a sovereign, and here means that all would solemnly acknowledge him to be the true God, and submit themselves to his government and will. See the phrase explained in the Note on ch. xix. 18. It means, that all would embrace the true religion, and acknowledge God as their King and their God. That this refers to the Messiah and his times, is apparent from the fact that it is twice quoted or referred to by the Apostle Paul, and applied by him to the Lord Jesus and his religion. Rom. xiv. 11; Phil. ii. 10. It is a glorious promise which remains yet to be fulfilled, but which shall certainly be accomplished. All that God has declared shall come to pass; and there is no promise in the Bible more certain than that this earth shall yet be filled with the knowledge of the true God.

24 Surely shall one say. In the

25. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, <sup>9</sup> and shall glory.

*9 Rom. 5. 1.*

NEW TRANSLATION.

25. In JEHOVAH shall all the seed of Israel be justified,  
And shall glory.

margin, "he shall say of me, in the LORD is all righteousness and strength." The design of the verse is, to set forth more fully the effect of the universal prevalence of the true religion; and the main thought is, that there shall be an universal acknowledgment that salvation and strength were in JEHOVAH alone. Idols could not save; men could not save; and salvation was to be traced to JEHOVAH only. A literal translation of the passage would be, "truly in JEHOVAH, he said unto me," or it is said unto me, *i. e.*, I heard it said, "is righteousness and strength." And the idea is, that it would be said; or this would be everywhere the prevailing sentiment, that righteousness and strength were to be found in JEHOVAH alone. And the sense is, (1) that they could obtain righteousness from him alone, or that it was by him alone that they could be pardoned and justified. They could not be self-pardoned; they could not work out a righteousness of their own; they could not be justified by any of their own works, but would be dependent on him for that righteousness by which they could be pronounced just in his sight. And (2) that it was by him alone that they could obtain *strength* or ability to meet their enemies to overcome their sins, to discharge their duties, to encounter temptations, to bear afflictions, and to support them in death. These two things, righteousness and strength, are all that man needs. These are to be found alone in JEHOVAH—in JEHOVAH manifested in Jesus Christ. And this verse, therefore, is a declaration that all that man needs shall be obtained from him, and that the universal acknowledgment shall be, that they are to be found in him alone. The whole of religion consists essentially in the feeling that all our righteousness and strength are to be found in God our Saviour.

The LXX render this, "every tongue shall swear to God, saying, righteousness and glory shall come unto him, and all those who make distinctions among them shall be ashamed." ¶ *Even to him shall men come.* For the purpose of being saved. They shall come to JEHOVAH in order to obtain redemption. See Note, ch. ii. 3. It should be a universal thing, that men should go to God, and seek salvation at his hands. ¶ *And all that are incensed against him.* All that are enraged against God, and opposed to his government and laws. ¶ *Shall be ashamed.* Note, ver. 16. The enemies of God shall see that their opposition is vain; they shall see their own feebleness and folly; and they shall be ashamed that they have endeavored to oppose one so mighty, and so glorious as the living God. This is to be the portion of all who oppose God. The time will come when they will be ashamed of their own folly, and be confounded with a sense of their own wickedness. The multitudes that have in various ways resisted him, shall see the folly of their course, and be overwhelmed with shame that they have dared to lift the hand against the God that made the heavens. Jarchi renders this, "all who have opposed themselves to God, shall come to him, led by penitence on account of the things which they have done, and shall be ashamed."

25. *In the LORD.* In Jehovah; or by Jehovah. Not in themselves; not by their own righteousness; not by any works which they have done. It shall be only in JEHOVAH that they shall find justification; and this must mean, that it is by his mercy and grace. The entire passage here, I suppose, has reference to the times of the Redeemer. See Notes on vs. 21—24. If so, it means that justification can be obtained only by the mercy of God through a Re-

deemer, and by his merits. The great truth is, therefore, here brought into view, which constitutes the sum of the New Testament, that men are not justified by their own works, but by the mercy and grace of God. ¶ *All the seed of Israel.* All the spiritual seed or descendants of Jacob. It cannot mean that every individual shall be justified and saved, for the Bible abundantly teaches the contrary. See Matt. viii. 11, 12; Rom. xi. But it must mean all who have a character resembling that of Israel, or Jacob; all who are the true children and friends of God; all who shall be saved. See Rom. ii. 28, 29; iv. 9—13. ¶ *Be justified.* Be regarded and treated as righteous. Their sins shall be pardoned, and they shall be acknowledged and treated as the children of God. See Notes on Rom. iii. 24, 25. To justify here, is not to vindicate, or to pronounce them innocent, or to regard them as deserving of his favor; but it is to forgive, to receive them into favor, and to resolve to treat them *as if* they had not sinned; that is, to treat

them as if they were righteous. All this is by the mere mercy and grace of God, and is through the merits of the Redeemer, who died in their place. ¶ *And shall glory.* Or rather, shall exult in him, shall praise and celebrate his goodness. The word here used (הָלַל, *hālāl*), means in Piel to sing, to chant, to celebrate the praises of any one, Ps. cxvii. 1; cxlv. 2; xlv. 9; 1 Chron. xvi. 36, and is the word of which the word *hallelujah* is in part composed. Here it means, that the effect of their being justified by JEHOVAH would be, that they would celebrate the goodness of God, they would be filled with joy, and would praise his name. This effect of being justified, is more fully stated in Rom. v. 1—5. It is a result which always follows; and a disposition to praise and magnify the name of God in view of his boundless mercy in providing a way by which sinners may be justified, is one of the first promptings of a renewed heart, and is one of the evidences that a soul is born again.

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